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No.

The Ideal Life
and
Moksha (Freedom)

[2nd. Revised Edition]

PRESENTED

Swami Narayanananda

PUBLISHERS NOTE

This book deals with four-fold aim of human life, i. e., Dharma (righteousness), Artha (accumulation of wealth), Kama (enjoyment), and Moksha (Freedom) and the control of mind by the practice of four Yogas, viz., Raja-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Karma-Yoga and Jnana-Yoga. In expounding the topics the author has kept in mind the needs of the modern man and has adopted the ancient message to modern conditions. Here an able and excellent attempt is made to commend the fullness of life as a desirable end and this book seeks to show the true way of life to modern man lost in the stress and struggle of the modern times. The chapter on 'Dharma' is highly illuminating and it is sure to profit many readers and the lucid expositions of different Yogas will be a great help to practical students of Yoga and even to householders also. *The Ideal Life* is one which the reader aspires for and which is shown clearly and simply in the book which hints at the joy of revelation and the mysteries in man.

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The Ideal Life and Moksha (Freedom)

[2nd. Revised Edition]

By

Swami Narayanananda

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PREFACE

It was first thought that the contents of this book would form part of the author's work on The Mysteries of Man, Mind and Mind-control. But as the contents and the size of this book grew beyond the limits set on it, its heading was changed from The Mysteries of Man, Mind and Mind-control, to The Mysteries of Man, Mind and Mind-functions, and the latter portion of the book is now presented to the public under the caption "The Ideal Life and Moksha (Freedom)."

The object of the book is to make the English knowing public who are on the wrong path, and who are blindly seeking sense – pleasures, understand the aim, the object and the goal of human life. It is to make them realise that real pleasure, and real bliss lies in attaining Moksha or realizing one's own True Nature, and not in the enjoyments of the evanescent sense-pleasures. And how Dharma (righteousness) helps a man to attain Moksha and what the means and ways to be adopted by a Truth-seeker are to get rid of the miseries, worries, troubles and tribulations of life; and how the great riddle of Samsara is to be solved - these are all discussed fully in this book. I hope that this book will meet a long-felt want in all English speaking countries.

Shanti Kutia,
Rishikesh.
24–11–1947.

Author

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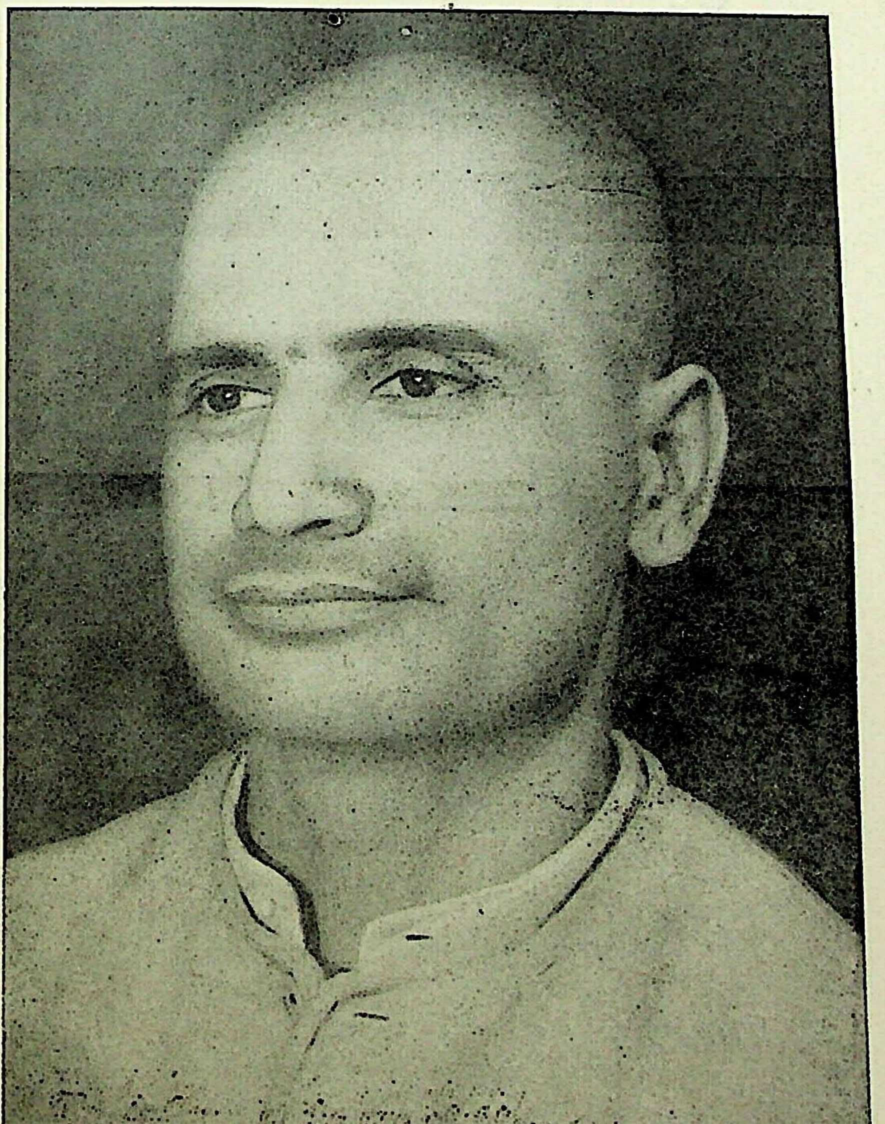
THE IDEAL LIFE
AND
MOKSHA (FREEDOM)

The Author : at the age of fifty



Swami Narayanananda

I

INTRODUCTION

Just imagine, a vessel brimful with syrup. Its flavour attracts numerous bees and flies which gather to the vessel with the object of enjoying themselves. But alas ! as soon as they sit on the syrup, their hands and feet get stuck up in it and they cannot tear themselves away from the vessel. Poor creatures ! they can neither enjoy themselves with the syrup, nor extricate themselves from the syrup. In this sad plight, they perish in the syrup. Likewise is the state of man in this world. Man has come here to rule, but alas ! he is being ruled. Ruled by what ? By Maha Maya the illusive power of God. He has come here to enjoy himself. But he is being enjoyed. By what ? By his own mind and the senses. Man suffers from so many worries, miseries, troubles and tribulations, because of his becoming a slave to his own mind and the senses. He who rules his senses, rules the whole world. And he who controls his mind, controls the whole universe. We are what our past desires, thoughts and acts have made us. What we sowed yesterday and the day before yesterday in the form of desires, thoughts and acts, that we are reaping today.

Man thinks that he will be happy by taking delight in the senses and their objects. He thinks that he will be happy by amassing wealth and by making a name and by earning a fame. But do these things actually make one happy ? No. Give a man all the pleasures pertaining to the five senses. Let him make use of them fully and freely. Will such a man be happy ? Can such a man have peace of mind and bliss ? No. A man who plunges himself in the pleasures of the senses without any restraint is a doomed man. Such a man will meet with premature decay and death. A man who gives himself up to the sense-pleasures freely and without restraint is like a fool who pours clarified butter into the burning fire with the object of putting it out. Clarified butter increases the fire ; but it can never extinguish it. Sense-pleasures dissipate the powers of the mind and the body and make a man weak, physically, mentally and morally. They rob the mind of its peace and make the whole life miserable and render it a failure, sure and certain.

Any amount of wealth will not make a man happy. Money is only a means to satisfy the cravings of the senses. The more one amasses wealth, the more one is assailed with plans, desires, anxieties and worries. It makes a man restless.

How often we see money leading a man to iniquity and thus making his life miserable! That is why Jesus says, "It is easy for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to attain God or to realize the Self." This is, verily, a fact. In ancient Rome there lived a very rich man. One evening he got the news of a ship-wreck, in which he lost almost all his fortune. He had only ten million pounds left. He felt very sad and disconsolate. The thought of tomorrow and how to maintain himself and his prestige haunted him all through the night. Poor man! he could not get a wink of sleep. Though he had ten million pounds, which is a fortune to an ordinary man, yet that amount was too little for him. He went on ruminating, and before it was day, he came to the conclusion that he should not live any more, and committed suicide. Such is the fate of wealth. With the increase of wealth, one's way of living changes and the expenses increase by leaps and bounds. A poor man thinks that he will be happy if he can save a few rupees against the rainy day. But when he gets the desired money, he finds it too little and he wants to keep in reserve at least one hundred rupees. When he amasses one hundred rupees, he finds that amount to be very little and he wants to hoard one thousand rupees. Thus, there is no end to one's avarice. So, money does not and cannot make a man happy. Instead of happiness, it brings on misery and bondage.

Name and fame binds a man and drags him down to bondage. It is a very hard nut to crack. It is just like rich food to a dyspeptic patient. The patient cannot digest the food and if he takes it, it will be death to him. Many people misuse power. It is very difficult to handle power properly. One requires enormous strength and self-control to use power in the right way. The desire for name and fame is a very hard thing to conquer. Ordinarily, a man aspiring after Truth finds it hard to renounce Kamini (lust) and Kanchana (gold or wealth). But by hard struggle one can conquer them. But the desire for name and fame remains stubborn and many who have renounced Kamini and Kanchana get entangled in its meshes. It is a very difficult thing to conquer this desire for name and fame. It clings to a man unconsciously and drags him down to retard his spiritual growth. For, even with the least leaven of desire one cannot attain Samadhi or Freedom. In fact the very idea of Freedom must be left off before one can attain Samadhi. Name and fame makes the ego. We often see how a single drop of water develops into a big bubble, lives for a while and then disappears. Likewise, people become famous all too suddenly from ignobleness. They live this life of fame for a while and perish like a bubble. An ordinary man has to think of his family and himself. But a man of name and fame has to take charge of and think of the millions of people who follow him. He has to work day and night without proper rest or respite. One wrong thought, one false step is sure to ruin him and his followers. So, name and fame does not make a man happy; it only increases the burden and drags one to bondage.

We have seen that neither money, nor name and fame gives a man real Bliss and Freedom. How to attain real Freedom and Bliss, then? Where does this true Freedom lie? It lies in knowing one's own True Nature. In each and every being, there is an inborn tendency to be Free. If you study all the activities of different beings, you will find them tend towards this one object "Freedom". All activities of different beings of the universe can be defined in one word, viz., "Freedom". Take the luminaries and the planets, take the different living beings of the world such as human beings and all terrestrial, aquatic, arboreal and aerial lives and see what they want. All are struggling to gain this one object "Freedom". This idea of Freedom is embedded even in a blade of grass. No one wants pain. No one wants misery. The very idea of misery, disease, decay and death is appalling to all. Though all the activities of beings tend towards Freedom, yet very few know what real Freedom means. Having taken a perverted course, the acts of the beings court misery instead of happiness, bondage instead of freedom, and pain instead of bliss.

Dharma is the means to attain Freedom. A man desiring Freedom must tread upon the path of Dharma. The second chapter deals with the different aspects of Dharma by following which one can attain Moksha. The third chapter deals with Artha, Kama and Moksha. The fourth chapter deals with Karma-Yoga, and how by Karma-Yoga a man attains Moksha. The fifth chapter shows how by Bhakti-Yoga one can attain God-realization and Moksha. The sixth chapter deals with Jnana-Yoga. It shows how a man by constant discrimination between the Real and the unreal attains Moksha. The seventh chapter deals with Raja-Yoga. It shows how a man by controlling the mind, senses, desires and thought-functions can attain Samadhi and Moksha.

* * *

II

DHARMA

The four-fold aim of human life is Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth or money), Kama (desire or lust or enjoyment), and Moksha (Freedom or Emancipation). Dharma is the very foundation upon which Artha and Kama stand. Artha and Kama, are in turn, only a means to attain Moksha.

The word "Dharma" is a Sanskrit word. And the idea of Dharma differs with different people and nations. To Egypt Dharma means religion; to Persia, purity; to Chaldea, science; to Greece, beauty; to Rome, law; to England, social freedom and politics; but to India it means all of them. In Hinduism, the word "Dharma" is not an article of faith or thought, nor gods, prophets, doctrines, and dogmas, but it is both the art and the science of life. It is not a thing of belief or theory, but it is a thing of living and acting, being and becoming. As such, the word "Dharma" is not confined to any sect, colour, creed, clime, country or nation, but covers all classes, creeds, nations and climes.

What is meant by Dharma ? That which holds and sustains is Dharma. Any factor contributing to an effort is Dharma. The essential properties inherent in different objects are called Dharma. The means of liberation prescribed for various classes of people are called Dharma. Truth is Dharma. The Divine Law is Dharma. The governing principle or the law of human and Divine, physical and metaphysical is called Dharma. The aggregate of eternal laws governing the very nature of things is called Dharma. The collection of authoritative utterances laying down one's Swadharma, viz., Varna (caste) and Ashrama (different stages of one's life) is called Dharma. An act that brings worldly prosperity here and eternal Freedom hereafter is called Dharma. All the regulated human activities from morn to eve, and from birth to death are known as Dharma. The inner conscience which differenciates between wrong and right is called Dharma. The means of attaining the rightful desired object is called Dharma. The means of eradicating the evils, miseries, attachments, and desires of one's life are called Dharma. The science that tends to God-realization is called Dharma. Any act of renunciation to realize the Self or God is called Dharma.

God is the centre of all Dharmas. The ordained rules and regulations for the moulding of one's character, the controlling of the mind and the senses, and the performance of the daily duties of the clergy and of the laity, such as religion, ethics or morality, intellectual pursuit, sanitation, municipal organization, principles of jurisprudence, political administration, righteousness, good works, good company, caste, law, one's own Swadharma, prescribed course of conduct, and sacrifice are called Dharma. Dharma is the principle of righteousness, of holiness as well as the principle of social amity and unity. The means prescribed by the Srutis (Scriptures) for God-realization and the way chalked out by great men and the advice given by one's own Guru (spiritual guide) towards the same goal are called Dharma.

It is Dharma which is born in the spiritual nature of men and women and to control the demands of their sensuous nature and to establish social equilibrium. Anything that brings unity and harmony in society, country and the wide world is called Dharma. Doing good to all the living beings of the universe, and one's duty towards Self-realization is called Dharma. Dharma is the earthly counterpart of Moksha, and if the latter is the Kingdom of God, the former is the Kingdom of God in earth. Dharma is the framework within which Artha and Kama have to operate.

The aim of Dharma is Freedom. Freedom from birth, freedom from growth, freedom from decay and death is called Dharma. Freedom from pain and pleasure, good and bad, virtue and vice and from all the pairs of opposites is the aim of Dharma. Divination of the whole human life is the aim of Dharma. And, as such, Dharma can be classified under three main heads, viz., Siddha-Dharma (Self-existent Dharma), Sadhya-Dharma (that Dharma which has to be accomplished as an end), and Sadhana-Dharma (that Dharma which has to be adopted as a means to that End).

Siddha-Dharma:- The eternal principle that holds and sustains the universe from times immemorial is called Siddha-Dharma. Siddha-Dharma has nothing to accomplish new; it is self-existent, eternal and universal. Siddha-Dharma is mainly performed by very great men, such as Incarnations of God. For, whenever virtue subsides and vice prevails, they come down on earth to destroy the wicked and to save the virtuous by establishing law and order. These great men, unlike other ordinary bound persons embody themselves on this earth of their own accord, out of sheer mercy for the suffering millions. These great men are not bound by past Karma (past acts) as they are freed Souls and are beyond the fetters of Maya (illusive power of God) and the three Gunas, i. e., Sattva, Rajas and Tamas (Prakriti the Creative Power of God, consists of three Gunas; and these Gunas are the cause of creation); whereas the ordinary Souls, even in spite of themselves, have to take birth. They are forced to do so, by their past good and bad effects of Karma (act). These Souls are rather helpless at the hands of Karma-Phala (the fruit of actions).

Sadhya-Dharma :-Sadhya-Dharma is the merit coming to a person by the performance of ordained duties according to the injunctions of the Shastras (The Vedas and the Smritis).

Sadhana-Dharma :-Sadhana-Dharma connotes the actions that accomplish the Sadhya-Dharma. Sadhana-Dharma can be divided into two groups, viz., universal and particular. Again, the universal Dharma can be grouped under three heads, i. e., bodily, vocal and mental. Practising charity, self-sacrifice, non-killing, cleanliness, non-stealing, protecting the weak, service unto one's Guru (teacher), to the needy and the helpless is called bodily Dharma. Speaking the Truth, sweetness and politeness of speech, reciting of the Scriptures and uttering of the Lord's name is called vocal Dharma. Contentment, faith in God, truthfulness, purity, concentration of the mind, one-pointed devotion to God, unselfishness, humility, compassion and love to all living beings is called mental Dharma. This universal Dharma is the same for all Varnas, Ashramas and for all climes and countries. It does not alter with the change of time, clime, etc.

Particular-Dharma :- Particular-Dharma differs as per (1) time (Yugas), (2) Kula (family or tribe), (3) place, (4) circumstance, (5) sex, (6) age, (7) good and bad fortune, (8) Varnas, (9) Varnashramas. As such, this Dharma will not tally in any two places. What is good for one may be a veritable sin for another.

1. **Time or Yuga-Dharma :-** (The Rishis of India have divided the duration of the world or a cycle into four parts, and they are called Yugas. The Yugas are Krita or Satya-Yuga, Tretha-Yuga, Dwapara-Yuga and Kali-Yuga). Meditation is prescribed as the Satya-Yuga Dharma. Yajna or sacrifice is prescribed as the Tretha-Yuga Dharma. Worship of God is prescribed as the Dwapara-Yuga Dharma. And for Kali-Yuga,

chanting of the Lord's name is prescribed as its Dharma.

As man undergoes changes such as childhood, boyhood and manhood, these Dharmas also undergo change in time. Hence, we see, in the same country, Dharma undergoes change. In Satya-Yuga, the people were pure, truthful and holy. As such, they could grasp the subtle truths easily and meditate upon the subtle truths of the Vedas. In Satya-Yuga, the Vedas were in prominence. In the course of time, people degenerated and the vast majority of human beings were not able to grasp and follow the Vedas, and the Dharma taught in the Vedas had to undergo a change. So, in the Tretha-Yuga, the Dharma taught in the Vedas took the grosser form, viz., the form of sacrifices, and the Smritis (the rules of conduct from birth to death) came into vogue. Or the subtle truths of the Vedas were given expression in the form of Smritis. In Dwapara-Yuga, the sacrifices and the Smritis underwent change and the religion or the Dharma took the more concretised form of worship of God through multifarious images and symbols. In Dwapara-Yuga, the subtle truths of the Smritis took the form of the Puranas and the Puranas came into prominence. In the long run, even this the people failed to grasp and the Dharma or the religion had to take a still grosser form in Kali-Yuga. Thus in Kali-Yuga, the Dharma taught in the Tantras and the chanting of God's name loudly came into prominence.

2. **Kula-Dharma :-** Different families have to perform certain hereditary duties such as worshipping of the tutelary deities, giving alms, feeding the poor on births and deaths and other rites.

3. **Desha-Dharma :-** Different countries have different Dharmas. With some it is politics; with some religion; with some patriotism; with some trade and with some others heroism, etc. For, change is the very nature of things. Nature herself differs and changes in different places. In different countries, the fauna and flora differ. As per these differences the Dharmas of different countries vary. They have to adjust accordingly.

4. **Kala-Dharma (Dharma according to circumstances) :-** Kala- Dharmas also differ. When a person is in good and favourable circumstance, he is forbidden to tell a lie, to commit adultery, robbery, etc. But under unfavourable or straitened circumstance one can violate these rules. Then, such a violation of these rules becomes one's Dharma. For example, when one can save

the life of another, or save a nation or country by telling a lie, one is considered to be free from the sin of telling a lie. In famine, when one's own life and that of the members of his family are in danger, one can rob food or take offal food if there is no other alternative. At such a time Dharma makes room for such as act. When progeny comes to a close or when the husband of a woman becomes an impotent, the woman can take another man for begetting a child to keep up the line of heritage. Dharma permits such an act.

5. Dharma of Sexes (Dharma of man and woman) :- The Dharma of a man differs from that of a woman. Public activities, amassing of wealth by fair means and the utilization of that wealth in protecting the members of his family, in the service of the country and in the service of the poor, weak, sick, maimed and helpless beings, etc., are considered to be the Dharma of a man. A man must love his country and nation and he must be always prepared to lay down his life, if necessary, for the sake of his country, and in saving his nation from slavery or foreign oppression and to save his parents, wife, children and women from molestation at the hands of the hooligans, robbers, etc. Prowess is the Dharma of a man. A coward, and one who runs away to save his own life when his wife and children are in danger can never be called a man. Such a man lives a most disgraceful life. To lead a peaceful life, to love and serve God, to take care of the home, to look after the children with a tender and loving care, to serve willingly the aged parents and other members of the family, to serve the guests, to treat the servants with love and tenderness, to give alms to the poor that visit the house, to serve the sick, poor and needy neighbours, etc., and to perform the timely religious functions, observance of occasional fasts on certain auspicious days—these are considered to be the Dharma of a woman. Public activities are not the sphere of a woman. She should never lead a shameless life or a life of bizarre. She must be chaste, pure and holy. She must be modest. A woman who is characterless and commits adultery will be a damned woman and will go to perdition.

6. The Dharma of age :- The Dharmas of the young and the aged differ greatly. The ancient Rishis (seers) of India have divided the whole life of man into four parts, viz., student, householder, retired life and a recluse. And they have chalked out their Dharmas respectively. As we are going to deal with these Dharmas of the four stages of the life of a man on earth, we shall not deal with the same here in detail.

7. The Dharma during good and bad fortunes :- The Dharma of a Brahmana is to be proficient in the Scriptures, preach Dharma to the other three castes and to teach secular knowledge, etc., and thus to lead a pure and stainless life when in good fortune. When this is not possible owing to straitened circumstances, one can pull on life by trade, etc. Dharma allows this. A Kshatriya in bad fortune can take to trade, cultivation of land and odd jobs. A Vaishya under misfortune and when there are no other means can serve others and thus maintain his life.

8. Varna-Dharma :- Hinduism has divided the whole society into four Varnas or castes, viz., Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. These four castes or Varnas have different Dharmas to follow. To be proficient in all the four Vedas, i. e., Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sama-Veda, and Atharva-Veda and to be proficient in all other learnings of art, science, etc., to be truthful, chaste, and to be devoted to God is the Dharma of a Brahmana. A Brahmana boy must have his thread ceremony performed at the age of five when he should go and live with a teacher to learn the Vedas, etc. He must study, meditate and realize the Truth. He must lead a pure life of celibacy up to the age of twenty-five, or thirty-five, or forty-five and then, if he likes, enter into a householder's life. If he does not like the householder's life he can go to the life of a Sannyasin (recluse). A Brahmana youth desiring to lead the life of a householder, must marry a girl of pure and perfect character and he must keep the sacred fire alive. As a householder he must live the life of simple living and high thinking. He must uphold Truth at any cost. He must lead a life of renunciation and contentment and adhere to Dharma under all circumstances. He must establish himself in the rules of Yama and Niyama, viz., Truthfulness, non-stealing, non-killing, Brahmacharya, and non-receiving of gifts conducive to luxury, and contentment, purity, austerity, study of the Scriptures and service unto teacher and elders and devotion and self-surrender to God. A Brahmana must always cultivate forbearance, uprightness and must be a believer in the hereafter. He must uphold Dharma, come what may. A Brahmana must be a guide to the other three castes concerning ethical and spiritual matters and he must be a perfect master of his senses and the mind. A Brahmana is to lead a sexual life till he begets one or two children just to keep up the line of heritage after which he must lead a life of celibacy. He must look upon his wife and other women as his own mother or sister. He must observe continence in thought, word and deed. A Brahmana should not hoard money and he should avoid luxury. If he does not follow these rules, he will be a fallen man.

Kshatriya-Dharma :- In one word, the Kshatriya stands for prowess. Prowess, boldness, fortitude, dexterity, generosity, sovereignty and not flying from battle are the Dharma of a Kshatriya. A Kshatriya must be learned in the science of war tactics. He must protect the country and give peace to the other three castes. He must never shrink from a rightfull war and he should never show his back to his enemies. For him, death in the battle-field is more honourable than a shameful retreat. The Kshatriya as a soldier must be very kind to his fallen foe. He must treat the conquered people in a generous way. He should never molest women and children of the conquered nation. He should not plunder or destroy the houses and the properties of the conquered people. If he violates these rules, he will be committing the worst sort of sin and will go to hell.

A Kshatriya boy at the right age of eight or nine, must have his thread ceremony performed· after which he should resort to a teacher's house and get educated. He must live a pure life of Brahmacharya (celibacy) up to the age of twenty-five, i.e., till he completes his studies, and then he should marry a chaste girl and lead the life of a householder. After completing his studies, if he has got enough dispassion and intense desire to realize God, he can renounce the world and take to the life of a recluse. A Kshatriya as a householder must lead a pure life. He should not tell lies. He should not commit adultery. He must serve the Brahmanas, students, and the Sannyasins.

The Kshatriya as a King must protect the country. The king must levy fair taxes for maintenance of peace and order in the country. The king must protect Dharma and punish all those who do not follow Dharma. The king must maintain Brahmanas, Brahmacharies and Sannyasins, who are the receptacles of Dharma. The king must give shelter to the poor and to the destitutes. He should never harass and ill-treat his subjects. He must maintain perfect law and order in the country. The king must enforce law and order and must punish the evil doers and those who violate law and order. The king must treat his subjects as his own children. He must enforce compulsary education amongst his subjects. He must keep good roads, charitable institutions, such as hospitals, rest houses, etc., and help and uplift trade, art, science, literature, etc. The prosperity of a king lies in the prosperity of his subjects. If the subjects are good, kind, truthful, happy, God-fearing and God-loving, the king will have prosperity and happiness. On the contrary, if the subjects are poor, miserable, dishonest and sinful the king has to take one fourth the share of that misery. By maintaining perfect law and order and by proper judgement punishing the evil doers, the king frees himself from sin. If a king does not punish the wicked people and those who violate law and order, commits a great sin and such a king will go to hell. For, the king is subject to one fourth of the share of the weal and woe of his subjects.

Vaishya and Shudra-Dharma :- Cultivation, trade and cattle-rearing are the Dharma of a Vaishya. The Vaishya after his thread ceremony at the age of eight or nine, must go to a teacher's house for learning. After finishing his studies, he must enter the householder's life. A Vaishya, as a householder, must attend to business by truthful means. He must hoard money in a legal way and a part of that money must be utilized for charity, such as in helping education, building charitable institutions, service of the poor, sick, needy and the helpless and in the service of the Brahmanas, Brahmacharies (students), Sannyasins and the kings. A Vaishya, as a householder, must be honest, truthful, kind, God-loving and God-fearing. He must be chaste and he should never commit adultery. He must find out new sources of income for himself and for his nation. He must be always a lover of his nation and country. The Dharma of a Shudra lies in cattle-rearing, cultivation and in rendering service to the Brahmanas, kings, Kshatriyas and to the Vaishyas.

Men and women of different nations, doctrines, dogmas, sects, castes and orders, each devoted to his or to her respective duties, reap the fruits of their actions after death. And with the residual good Karma, one attains to birth in a superior country, caste and family, possessed of comparatively superior Dharma, span of life, learning, conduct, wealth, happiness and intelligence. And those that have bad Karma or demerits take birth in an inferior and unprosperous country, low-caste, uncivilized poor family possessed of inferior kind of Dharma, short span of life, bad conduct, dull intelligence, beset with misery and ignorance. The division of caste is according to the Karma (or habits and tendencies formed by desires, thoughts, acts and associations of the past life) manifesting itself in the present as the effect. The ancient Indian or the Aryan caste system is based on sound principles. Each man sticking up to his Swadharma (own Dharma) according to the taste, tendency, and the predominating Gunas which one inherited by birth as a result of one's past life's merits or demerits, the country or the nation used to be happy and prosperous. It was only in the middle ages degeneration and abuse of the caste system appeared as we see it now. In olden times when there was a war, the Kshatriyas only used to go to fight. The other three castes, viz., Brahmanas, Vaishyas and the Shudras kept themselves busy in their daily occupations. Thereby, when there was a war, the country or the whole nation never suffered from the havoc of the war as is found in modern times. In these days whenever there is a war the whole country is engaged in it and the consequences thereby are terrible misery on all sides. But in olden times it was not so.

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9. Varnashrama-Dharma:- Hinduism has divided the life of a Brahmana, Kshatriya and a Vaishya into four Ashramas or stages, i. e., Brahmachari (student), Grihasta (householder), Vanaprastha (retired or forest life) and Sannyasi (recluse).

Brahmachari Ashrama-Dharma :- When a Brahmana, Kshatriya or a Vaishya boy is invested with the sacred thread he becomes a Dwija (twice born, i. e., he is considered to have a second and new birth after the thread ceremony). A boy of these three castes, after the thread ceremony, has to retire to a teacher's house for learning. The boy must approach the teacher with great humility. There, in the teacher's house, having become an inmate of the teacher's family, he must carry out the behests of the teacher and try to please him with whole-hearted service. A Brahmachari must look upon the teacher, his wife and children as his own father, mother, sisters and brothers. In the Brahmachari Ashrama, the student must cultivate good habits. He must try to become a master of his senses and the mind. He must look upon and treat every woman and girl as his own mother or sister. He should never commit adultery or abuse celibacy even in thought, word or deed.

A Brahmachari must live a very simple life of contentment. A Brahmachari must bathe early in the morning with cold water; offer oblations to the Pitris (manes), Rishis (Truth seers) and to the Devas (gods). A Brahmachari must avoid honey, flesh, sandal paste, flowers, garlands, perfumes, intoxicating drinks, and smokes, and the association with the opposite sex. He should not cosmify his body and should not use fine clothes, shoes, umbrella, oil to the head and body, and collyrium to the eyes. A Brahmachari must be a master of the six enemies such as Kama (desire and lust), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Moha (Infatuation), Mada (pride), and Matsarya (jealousy). A Brahmachari must be always truthful, God-loving and God-fearing. He must always speak the truth and adhere to truth. He must love all beings. He must never find fault with the short-comings of other people. He should never watch the movements of his opposite sex. A Brahmachari must sleep on a rough bed, never on a soft one. He must sleep alone and never sleep in the same room with persons of the opposite sex. A Brahmachari should not use ornaments, read love-poems, erotic novels and sing or hear love-songs. He should never attend any drama that bears a sexual appeal. A Brahmachari must urinate before going to sleep and after urination he must wash the anus and the genital organ with cold water. A Brahmachari must avoid over-eating or over-loading the stomach. He must avoid gossip at any cost and should not chew betel leaves. A Brahmachari should not take irritating medicines, heat producing food nor should he ever suppress the call of nature. A Brahmachari must always use Coupinum (loin cloth), and must think of God just before going to sleep and as soon as he wakes up from sleep. A Brahmachari must avoid talking and hearing of adulterers and should never get near them at all. A Brahmachari must never see the naked body of his opposite sex and he should never see the love-courtings and sexual enjoyments of animals, reptiles, birds, etc. A Brahmachari must be always obedient to his father, mother, elder brothers and sisters, to the senior students and to other relatives. A Brahmachari should not chit-chat or sit loosely in front of his teacher or in front of his parents. Until and unless the parents and the teacher ask him to sit, he must remain standing in front of them. These are some of the rules of Brahmacharya and the Dharma of Brahmachari Ashrama.

Brahmachari Ashrama is the very foundation upon which the other three succeeding Ashramas stand. Success in Brahmachari Ashrama means success in all the other subsequent Ashramas also. There is no material or spiritual success without perfect Brahmacharya. There is nothing impossible to attain under the canopy of earth and heaven by a perfect Brahmachari. A perfect Brahmachari shines like a noonday sun in all spherers of life. The life of a Brahmachari stands for strict discipline. It is in the Brahmachari Ashrama that a man builds up a strong body, a strong mind and an adamantine will-power. He who neglects the Brahmachari Ashrama-Dharama neglects and misses the aim of life, and the whole life of such a man becomes miserable. So in order to control the turbulent mind and the senses, rigorous rules and regulations have been laid down in the Brahmachari Ashrama-Dharma. The most dangerous period of a man's life is in between ten and thirty years. Whatever habits and tendencies one cultivates during this period, those habits and tendencies remain strong for the whole lifetime and to eradicate them in later life is a very hard thing. Many find it impossible to root out the habits of the transitional period of their lives. So in order to escape from all these pitfalls and dangers and to make the whole life prosperous and happy, particular attention has to be paid to the Brahmachari Ashrama-Dharma.

Grihasta Ashrama-Dharma (Dharma of a householder) :- After completing his studies (the lowest kind of Brahmacharya is to live the life of celibacy up to the age of twenty-five ; the middle kind of Brahmacharya is to lead the life of celibacy up to the age of thirty-five, and the highest kind of Brahmacharya is to live the life of celibacy up to the age of forty-five) and having attained manhood, the student if he desires to lead the life of a householder takes leave of his Guru with the latter's permission. On the other hand, if he is blessed with a true dispassion for the mundane things of the world and if he is bent upon realizing the highest Truth, he is allowed to observe and live a life of celibacy during the whole of his lifetime. Such a student would devote his life to study, writing Scriptures and in Divine contemplation. And the student who wants to lead a householder's life, just before going to take leave of his Guru should worship the Guru with flowers, garlands, incense and sandal paste and offer him gifts in the form of gold, silver, cows, clothes, fruits and sweets according to his means and should beg the Guru, with folded hands, to accept the humble offerings and then to bless him and give directions regarding the Dharma of his next Ashrama. And the Guru being pleased with the disciple would give him parting advice regarding the Grihasta Ashrama-Dharma.

The Dharma of Conjugal happiness :- According to the householder's Dharma a young man must marry a virtuous girl. The marriage must be mainly for the sake of progeny and as an aid to keep the sacred fire alive and to look after other household duties. For, no one can keep the sacred fire without a wife as a partner. On the other hand, marriage should never be for the gratification of the senses, but if so, it will be a great sin and against the Dharma of a householder. In the Dharma of a householder, there is no free license even among the married couples for sexual enjoyments. One must unite with one's mate after the monthly course according to the injunctions of the Scriptures (observing the Rithu Dharma), only for the sake of progeny. Such a man, though a house-holder, is still observing Brahmacharya. The uniting day of a married couple is in-between the fourth and the fifteenth day after the menses. Even that meeting day should not be an eclipse of the sun or the moon, or any other auspicious day such as full-moon, new-moon, Ekadasi (the eleventh day after the new-moon or the full-moon) and Sankranti (the time between the ending of a month and the beginning of a new month), etc. One should never cohabit in a temple, public place or road, a dispensary, in a Brahmachari's house, in the house of a preceptor, in the morning, in daytime, in the evening, in an unclean state of body and mind, after taking medicines, after hard labour, while in a tired state of mind and body, while fasting, after meals, in the bed of a friend or of a revered person, suppressing the calls of nature, when in sorrow, anger, etc.; in the presence of another person and while on pilgrimage. The wife and husband should never cohabit while in pregnancy. A married man must observe these rules strictly regarding his sexual enjoyment. If not, he will be a fallen man.

The aim of married life is not the gratification of the carnal appetites but the attainment of Moksha (Freedom). Married life has got a very sacred function to carry out in life. The husband and wife must first direct their whole efforts to the attainment of Dharma (righteousness). Keeping Dharma always in view, they must amass wealth. And then keeping Dharma again, they must enjoy, they must beget proper progeny and, last of all, they must attain Moksha. So the couple should always, keeping an eye on Moksha, engage themselves in Dharma, Artha and Kama. This is the four-fold aim of a married life. If the couple follows these rules, then and then only married life has a value and meaning but not otherwise.

Husband's treatment of the wife :- The wife must be honoured and adored by the husband who desires his own welfare. Where woman is honoured (wife is honoured), there the gods are pleased ; but where wife is ill-treated and dishonoured, there no sacred rite yields reward. Where woman lives in grief, there the whole family perishes. On the contrary, where woman is happy, there the family prospers. In the family in which the wife is pleased with her husband and the husband with his wife, there will be everlasting happiness. Proper offspring, the due performance of religious duties, faithful service, highest conjugal happiness, protection of household Dharma, heavenly bliss for the ancestors and to oneself all these depend upon the wife alone. So, there must be mutual fidelity between the wife and the husband till death. This is considered to be the sum and substance of the highest law for a wife and her husband. The husband must please the wife with ornaments and good clothes. He should speak to her kind and loving words. He should never be cross with her, nor should he ever use rough and scolding words. He must be very polite in his speech and behaviour. He must always protect her from all kinds of dangers. The man must lay down his life even in saving that of his wife from danger and from the hands of the hooligans. The coward who runs away to save his own life leaving the wife in danger will go to eternal perdition. The husband must see the Divine Mother, the Mother of the Universe, in the person of the wife. His love and regard for and attachment to her should never be for the sake of the perishing flesh but it should be for the sake of the eternal Spirit. The man must have his sexual connections with his wife only till he begets one or two children for keeping up the line of heritage. After getting children, he must treat the wife as his own mother or sister and should never have any sexual connection with her.

The man's duty towards his children :- The highest good that a father can do to his children is to educate them properly, train them properly and to make them men and women of pure and sterling character with an iron will coupled with a strong body and mind. Such sons and daughters can do miracles in this world. Parents, by hoarding money and by amassing fabulous wealth, often ruin the characters and the whole career of their sons and daughters who are thereby made to suffer hell-fire. So the leaving of wealth for the children by the parents, without properly training and educating them, is nothing but a sin on their part. On the other hand, if the children are properly educated and if they are made real men and women of character they make fortunes by themselves without inheriting much from their parents. But sons and daughters who have improper education often lose all the wealth they inherit as patrimoney. So, the first and foremost duty of a father is to educate his sons and daughters properly. The father must look after his children with loving care. He must always have an eye on the mental and physical growth of his children. He should not give corporal punishment to the children when they go wrong. But they must be mended with loving words and kindness. The father must protect his children from bad association, and from evil company. He must provide them with decent clothes and nutritious food, food that helps the physical and mental health and growth of the children. The father's cares end when the sons attain manhood. He must leave the responsibility of the home, etc., in the hands of the grown up sons. The father must treat the daughters with pure love and tenderness. For, one's daughters are the highest objects of tenderness. Hence, if one happens to get offended with them, he must bear with them without resentment. The father must protect the daughters up to the marriageable age and then marry them to young, handsome youths of good character. During the marriage the father must give the daughter ornaments, clothes and money and thus please her.

The Dharma of a wife :- The progress of a nation entirely depends upon the number of good mothers it has. Where woman is educated and honoured, where woman is chaste and noble, there the nation prospers. There the Mother of fortune blesses and smiles. And where woman is corrupt and fallen, there the results are just the contrary. Morality is the very foundation upon which human growth and welfare depends. Woman is the very custodian of morality. The child is the father of man and the mother's heart is the child's schoolroom. What an influence the mother's character has over the child! What a faith the child has in the mother's words! How the tender brain automatically imbibes the words and acts of the mother! Every word and every action of the mother produces a definite mark in the young mind and these imprints, in the long run, appear in a tangible form as character in an adult. As such, the child's future entirely depends upon the mother and the ideal mother is the most powerful social reformer. Many great men and Saints have received impetus and inspiration from their wives and mothers.

So, the greatest good that a woman can do to a nation is not by taking part in public life, not by appearing on public platforms and in parliaments, but by leading a pure, speckless and ideal life. With a very few women this public life may prove useful and successful, but in the vast majority of cases it becomes a nuisance and a failure. What is food for man is verily poison for woman. As caste by occupation must continue for the survival and welfare of human beings and that of the whole universe, so also sex distinction must prevail and their respective responsibilities chalked out, if the world wants to thrive. Modesty has more thorns than beauty and woman, by her very nature, stands for modesty, tenderness and purity. Any woman who lacks these qualities, lacks everything. By confining woman's activities to home, we are not in any way degrading her place and position, but we are only enhancing them. Hinduism in confining woman's activities to home life, has not deprived her of her honour and freedom. The mother rules the home. The mother is the most sacred and the most honoured person. The ideal mother is the greatest Guru and the foremost duty of a son and a daughter is to please, to honour, to revere, and to worship the mother first. For, it is said in the Shastras that the Guru (spiritual teacher) is ten times more venerable than the sub-teacher (teacher who imparts secular knowledge); the father is a hundred times more venerable than the Guru; but the mother is a thousand times more venerable than the father. So, the ideal mother has been given a very high place in society. Can any man sacrifice so much of energy and personal comforts in bringing up a child? Can anyone deny the bliss of a peaceful and loving home? We all realise what a soothing effect and influence a peaceful and loving home has. What a consolation—what a bliss is a true home, after a long, weary and hard day's toil! Who can minimize the importance and the sacredness of such a home? None but a fool can gainsay the important role the ideal mother plays in the upliftment of a nation.

The foremost Dharma of a wife is chastity. She must be chaste in thought, word, and deed. She should never have any illicit sexual connections. She should never speak of and hear of debauchery. She should not even think of cohabitation with any person. She should not look at any man with a carnal eye. She must be very faithful to her husband. She must look and treat her husband as God. She must always love him and serve him whole-heartedly. She should never become angry with her husband. She must attend to his comforts with a willing consent. She should not sit loosely before her husband. She should never tempt him and excite him sexually. She must always exercise control over her mind, speech and senses. She must behave very modestly towards her husband. The woman must get up and be out of her bed at three or four A. M., finish her ablutions and then she must meditate on God. By six o'clock she must be ready to render service to the aged parents-in-law and to her husband, etc. The woman as a house-wife must serve the aged members of the house with love and respect. She must attend to their needs timely even in spite of servants. She must be always kind and loving to the aged and to the sick persons of the house. The wife must be polite and kind and treat the father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, and brother-in-law as her own father, mother, sister and brother. She must be kind and amiable with one and all. She should not be rude and cross with the house-hold servants. She must treat the servants as her own children. The woman as a house-wife should create a serene, pure and holy atmosphere in the home. She must look after all the things of the house. There should never be any waste of food, etc. She must pay particular attention to sanitation. She must keep everything neat and tidy. The poor people who come to her for alms should never go back empty handed. She must give something to one and all according to her means. She must attend to the guests and please them with food, drinks and kind and loving speech. A house-wife must be kind to her neighbours and relatives. She must always help and serve the poor and helpless neighbours.

She should never be selfish. She must be always kind and generous to one and all. She must always act like a soothing balm, a great consolation to the husband, when the latter returns home after a hard day's toil. A true wife must share the burden of her husband and give him always good counsel. By her pure love, devotion and by her power of character, she must direct the husband on the right and, therefore, the ideal path. Even a man going on the wrong path can be mended easily by a strong wife of ideal character. The wife must always stand by the side of her husband in weal and woe. She should never betray him in pain, misery, worries and sorrows. She must be a support, a back'bone to her husband, when the latter is in adversity.

The general duty of a householder :- The married couple must perform their daily Yajnas (religious rites, sacrifices, worship or an action done with a good or spiritual motive), i. e., they must perform the five daily duties, viz., 1) Deva Yajna : offering sacrifices to the gods. 2) Brahma Yajna : Teaching and reciting the Scriptures. 3) Pitri Yajna : offering libations of water and sending good thoughts to one's departed ancestors. 4) Nri Yajna : the feeding of the hungry, the poor and the helpless, who come to the house. 5)

Bhuta Yajna : the feeding of the domestic animals, birds, etc. A householder by the daily use of the pestle and the mortar, the grinding stone, the oven, the water jar and the broom, kills life and thus incurs sin. By the performance of the five daily Yajnas he absolves himself of the five-fold debt. A householder must attend to his business or cultivation without any neglect. He must amass wealth by fair means only. With the money earned thus, he must maintain his wife, children, parents and other members of the family in a decent way. He must utilize a part of his earnings for charitable purposes, i. e., helping the spread of education, for the service of the Brahmacharies, Brahmins, Sannyasins, the poor, the sick, the helpless and the maimed, and in building schools, hospitals, temples, rest-houses, public tanks, wells and planting of colonnades, and in helping the Government, etc. A householder is always a supporter of the other three Ashramas, viz., Brahmachari, Vanaprastha and Sannyasi Ashramas. A householder who is selfish and who cares only for himself and his family and who does not care to alleviate the sufferings of the poor and helpless neighbours commits the worst sort of sin. Such a man is fallen from his Dharma and will go to perdition. A householder must always be loyal to his king and country and he must be prepared to sacrifice his all for the sake of the country, if necessary.

If every householder observes his own Dharma properly, there is no need for modern Socialism (which is stained with hatred and blood) to make way in India. India and Hinduism have preached the highest kind of Socialism which is based on pure love and reason, even from very old times. People have forgotten their own Dharma and they have become too narrow minded and selfish. The Dharma followed at present is rank selfishness and hoarding of money by nefarious means and spending it recklessly in enjoying the sense-objects and other useless things. One does not care for the sufferings of one's neighbours. The neighbours may be starving for want of a morsal of food but much food continues to be wasted in the rich man's house. And the rich man has not the head or the heart to help the suffering poor. That is why many poor and middle class people feel the necessity of bringing Russian Socialism into India. The highest Dharma of a householder is self-sacrifice. The lazy man, the miserly man, the selfish man are far removed from the ideal life of a householder. The householder must always work hard and find out sources of income. And with that income he must serve other people as many as he can. The Brahmachari Ashrama, the Vanaprastha Ashrama and the Sannyasi Ashrama, all depend for support on the householder. It is said in the Scriptures that a householder must serve and treat his mother as Goddess (The Mother of the Universe), he must serve and treat his father as God, he must serve and treat his teacher as God; he must serve and treat a guest as God and he must serve and treat the poor and the helpless neighbours as God. So the life of a householder stands for generosity, pure love, service and self-sacrifice. If the householder follows his Dharma properly, all the other Ashramas also mend their Dharma. If the householder falls away from the ideal life all the other Ashramas also become degenerate. For, the householder is the prop and support of the other three Ashramas. If the parents are good, they generally have a good progeny. And the Brahmacharies of such good parents will shine well in life and will be able to lead an ideal life of Brahmacharya. And such Brahmacharies, in later life, will be good householders, good Vanaprasthies, and ideal Sannyasins. On the other hand, if the parents are bad and fallen from their Dharma, the offsprings of such parents can never be good Brahmacharies. When a man neglects to live the ideal life of Brahmacharya, he can never be a good and ideal householder, Vanaprasthi, and Sannyasi. For the genuine, all-round growth of a man we have to take into consideration four main things, viz., heredity, environment, ability and effort. The children of ideal and good parents get all these four qualities in the persons of their father and mother and such children can make speedy progress in every walk of life. So the householder should stick to his Dharma at any cost. Then only a nation can prosper.

Vanaprastha Ashrama-Dharma (Dharma of retired life) :- Having finished their household Dharma and the three-fold aim of human life, viz., Dharma, Artha and Kama, and having begotten proper children, the married couple should, when the children are properly educated and they attain manhood and when the man and his wife are pretty old, give charge of the family responsibilities to the grown-up sons and must retire into forest or any other secluded place and devote their time right earnestly in attaining Moksha, the ultimate Goal and End of human life. In the forest or in a secluded place, at a very picturesque spot, if possible, on the bank of a river, the retired couple must make a hut or a Kutia for their living and must observe the rules of Yama and Niyama, (Yama is : non-killing, truthfulness, celibacy or Brahmacharya, non-stealing and non-receiving of gifts. One has to observe these things in thought, word and deed. Niyama is : cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study of Scriptures and self-surrender unto God). The aged couple must stick to the rules of Yama and Niyama at any cost and must live by begging food or on wild fruits, roots and herbs. A Vanaprasthi must retain his sacred thread, Shika (tuft of hair on the crown of the head), the sacred fire, offering of libations of water to the departed ancestors morning and evening and may put on ochre robes if he likes or else, pure white clothes. Thus the husband and wife must forego the bodily comforts and must devote their whole time in worship, study and to subtle meditation. In this way, they must discipline their mind by restraining the senses constantly and prepare themselves for the higher or Divine life, by leading very pure, simple and holy lives.

Sannyasa Ashrama-Dharma :- After living a pure and speckless holy life, attaining perfect control over the senses and mind, and training the mind in subtle meditation, discrimination and dispassion and after realizing the Atman or Brahman (the Supreme Spirit), the aged couple should embrace the last Ashrama, viz., Sannyasa Ashrama. A Sannyasi is one who has gone beyond all the pairs of opposites, homeless and free from worries and fears but keeps in view Brahman and Brahman alone. Endued with a pure intellect, subduing the body and the senses with fortitude, relinquishing sound, touch, sight, taste and smell, abandoning all superfluous luxuries, using only the necessary things for the bare maintenance of the body; and even for those things laying aside attraction and aversion, eating but little, and with his body, mind and speech controlled, a Sannyasi must ever engage his mind in meditation upon the nature of the Self and with one-pointedness of thought on one feature of the Self. A Sannyasi must forsake egoism, power, lust, wrath, greed, infatuation, pride, hatred, and property. He must be free from the notion of "Mine". He must be always content and tranquil-minded. The balance of his mind should never get upset under any states and circumstances. He should have no desires and he must love all beings as his own Self.

When he embraces Sannyasa, the Vanaprasthi renounces the sacred fire, sacred thread, cuts off the tuft of hair from the top of his head and puts on the sacred ochre clothes and leaves off the offering of libations of water to his departed ancestors and the daily Yajnas. For now he is a free man–free from all kinds of obligatory duties. He is not to care for nor have any connection with his wife, children, friends and relatives He is not bound to anyone and he roams about freely without any attachment to any object or person. A Sannyasi may live in one place in a Kutia or underneath a tree or he may wander freely from place to place without worries, cares and without attachment like a free lion.

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III

ARTHA, KAMA, AND MOKSHA

Artha :- As has been already said the four-fold aim of human life is Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, and we have already dealt with Dharma. In this chapter we shall deal with Artha, Kama and Moksha. Artha means wealth. It may be amassing of money, gold,silver or landed property. etc. A householder has to amass wealth and it is his Dharma to do so. A married man who fails to earn money to maintain in a decent way his wife, children, aged father, mother and the other members of the household grossly neglects his Dharma. Such a man cannot make headway spiritually also. In this iron age and in this time of competition between a nation and a nation, between a caste and a caste, between a sect and a sect and between man and woman, even a Brahmana has to find out his own way of earning his livelihood. In olden times, the Brahmanas, the Brahmacharies and the Sannyasins; were maintained by the king, by the rich and by the middle class laity. They considered it to be a great privilege on their part to serve a Brahmana, a Brahmachari and a Sannyasi. In these days, people have lost faith in thair Dharma and their faith in the service of the above mentioned three classes of people is also dwindling away with the result that very few care for their religion or for rendering service unto a Brahmana, a Brahmachari and a Sannyasi. In some parts of the country there are some free Pathashalas and Kshetras (Sanskrit schools and free food distributing houses) for the maintenance of Brahmana students and for the Sannyasins. Even these handful of institutions are not up to the mark, they somehow maintain their existences but are very badly managed. Besides, it is very difficult to find a true Brahmana, Brahmachari or Sannyasi of the olden type. With the destruction of Varna and Varnashrama Dharmas the life of the different caste people is in a muddle. The olden Brahmachari Ashrama is no more. We do not find the olden Gurukula System in these days. The householder is far removed from ideal life. The Brahmanas are made to work as cooks of the rich men. Vaishyas rule the Kingdom and the Kshatriyas take to trade and cultivation. A Brahmana can preach, rule, fight and carry on business without let or hindrance from any quarter. So also can a Kshatriya, a Vaishya or a Shudra. Any man of intellect and intelligence can occupy any important place in Government offices and can do any work according to his taste and capacity. So caste remains only in name but devoid of its Dharma. The Dharma followed by the different castes is only visible in the kitchen. The spirit of Dharma is forgotten and they fight over the rinds. A Brahmana of a certain Gotra will not take food and water from another Brahmana of a different Gotra. A Kshatriya will not dine with another Kshatriya of a different Gotra. So also a Vaishya and a Shudra.

There was a time when the Brahmana-power ruled the nation. Then the Brahmanas were very powerful and they were respected and revered everywhere. Even the mighty Emperors feared them and worshipped them when they visited his Kingdom. Gradually the Brahmanas degenerated, lost their power and Kshatriya-power predominated. Then we see the Kshatriyas not only as kings but as great spiritual teachers. We find the greatest spiritual teachers to be Kshatriyas. The vast majority of the people of the country follow the religion preached by the Kshatriya teachers like Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Viswamitra, Janaka, Bhishma, Mahavira, etc. Rama and Sita, Krishna and Radha are household names, and they are worshipped even by the most orthodox Brahmanas. The Gayatri Mantra revealed by the Sage Viswamitra is daily uttered by every Dwija (the three castes, Bhramana, Kshatriya and Vaishya) all over the country. For some centuries the Kshatriya-power ruled and predominated over the country and in the long run, it also degenerated giving place to Vaishya-power. In these days money is a very great worldly power and it commands every respect. A man may be a great scholar or a great scientist, but if he lacks money, he is not cared for. A man may be a great writer but if he lacks money it will be very difficult for him to be known and often the writings of such a man perish without notice or publication. In these days money is everything. If a street dog were to possess money, it would be surely worshipped. It will find a warm reception everywhere. Men and women of even very low character are respected and applauded by one and all, if they are rich. It is not character that commands respect in these days but it is the money that one possesses. It is not the ability and worth of a person that carries weight but it is the propaganda carried on his behalf that tells and commands respect. So, we are passing through critical time. Caste, Dharma, etc., are all in a muddle. Such being the case, the different Varnas and the Varnashramas feel the necessity of Artha (money) for their maintenance. They have to stand on their own feet to carry on.

In olden days caste restrictions were not so severe and rigid as we find them in these days. People understood the spirit of the caste system and practised it by birth and by occupation. A man of great merits and intelligence was always given a very high place. He was considered and taken to be a Brahmana. We have the names of some great Rishis who had a very low birth but are worshipped and their teachings are followed even by the most orthodox Dwijas in these days. If we reject the teachings of these great men, the Indian Scriptures will be all the poorer and the fame and greatness of the Indian Rishis will fade away. The great Rishi Vasishta, the Guru of Rama and the author of Yoga Vasishta (a treatise on Adwaita Vedanta) was born of Urvasi, the dancing girl of Indra (the king of gods). Viswamitra was a Kshatriya by birth and a king to begin with but by intense Tapasya (penance) he became a Brahma Rishi. Narada, the Deva Rishi, was the son of a maid servant (Dasi). Agastya was born from a water pot. The great Rishi Gautama was born of a hare. The great Rishi Vyasa, who brought the four Vedas into book form and who wrote the eighteen Puranas was born of a fisherwoman. Valmiki who wrote the great epic, Ramayana, started life as a highway man. The Rishi Jambuka was born of a Jackal. The Rishi Kausika was born from Kusha grass. The Rishi Rshyasrnga was born of a deer. The few names given above are all Brahma Rishis and they are very highly respected by all people all over India. But in these days we see people are blindly following caste by birth only. They have totally forgotten the spirit of the caste system.

In deciding one's caste, we must take both the factors into consideration. A man inherits certain good and bad qualities from his parents and certain good and bad merits from his past Karma. So, we sometimes see very low-charactered men and women coming of very good and noble parents and vice versa. Brahmana's son may not always be a Brahmana. The son may have the Kshatriya or the Vaishya traits predominating. Likewise, a Kshatriya's or a Vaishya's son may not be a Kshatriya or a Vaishya. He may be born with Brahmana qualities predominating in him. The olden Rishis knew this secret and so in deciding one's caste they considered both the things, i. e., birth and ability. So the ancient caste system was very sound, scientific and happy.

The most deplorable thing at present is the wrong system of education both for boys and girls. It is full of evils. Man cannot live without true religion, science and art. So long as there is a body to live, so long as there is the idea of life, disease, decay and death, one cannot deny God. In some form or other the idea of an Almighty Being remains with man. At present, religion, science and art are being used to exploit the poor and the down-trodden and to support the rich and the state. Art and Science are utilized in increasing the idle pleasures of the drones (rich people) and to strengthen the power of the state. The present caste system by birth has lost all its essentials. We see Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras devoid of their Dharma. Still, we blindly cling to caste by birth. The result is that we see a Brahmana doing the work of a Shudra, a Shudra or a Vaishya doing the work of a Brahmana, etc. As the situation stands, everyone a Brahmana, or a Kshatriya or a Vaishya has to earn money for his maintenance. And that earning of money is to be done by fair means. Dharma should never be forgotten while amassing wealth. Always keeping Dharma in view one must make money or else one will go to eternal perdition. But what we see, at present is that almost every man, totally forgetting Dharma, tries to earn money in an illegal way.

Take for example, people who earn their livelihood by means of trade, cultivation, government or private jobs. They do not apply Dharma. A Brahmana, or a Kshatriya or a Vaishya amassing wealth either by trade or cultivation or by jobs makes money in nefarious ways. In trade, almost everyone takes to black market. The price of every article of daily use has gone abnormally high. With all the abnormal prices it is very difficult to get pure things. Every bit of a thing is being adulterated and sold at a very high price with cent percent profit. In cultivation also they do the same tricks, but it is much less when compared with trade. Coming to people who earn their livelihood by government or by private employments we see so much of bribery going on from top to bottom. The police department is meant for the safety and welfare of the people, but it is the most corrupt department. Bribery in a variety of ways takes place in this department. The number of Officers who do not take bribery are few and far between. Then take the civil and judicial departments. There is corruption also. A barrister or a Vakil with the power of his arguments will make yea into nay and vice versa. Here the intellect is being prostituted and one kills the dictates of conscience by taking wrong cases, wrong sides and winning them. In the civil departments also bribery is rampant. Take forest and municipal managements. There also bribery in a variety of forms takes place. And people who serve under private concerns also dupe and swindle their masters whenever they get a chance to do so. Such is the state of human mentality, as it stands now. It has been said already that all the different caste people have to earn money, but this earning of money should never be done in an illicit way. Illegal way of earning money is against Dharma and it is an unpardonable sin. One should never give way to such wrong means of earning money because such immoral people are far removed from ideal life and from God.

Kama :- Kama means desire. It also means lust and enjoyment. But here it means the right and proper way of enjoying the money earned. In Kama also one has always to keep the Dharma in view. With the money earned by fair means, one has to maintain in a decent way one's aged father, mother, wife, children and other members of the household who depend on one. A portion of the money earned must be set apart for the service of the country, for the service of the poor, the sick and the helpless. A man who does not keep a certain portion of his income for charitable purposes commits sin. Life must be unselfish. There must be kindness towards all beings, and one must forget the small self. One's necessities must be simple and one must avoid luxury. In the enjoyment of the amassed wealth there must be proper adjustment. Many people suffer from lack of it. Many spend money beyond their means. They try to imitate their rich neighbours in their dress, food, etc. This is bad. One must know one's income and then spend a certain portion for the upkeep of one's family setting apart a certain percentage for charity. Such a man alone observes Dharma and enjoys peace of mind and life.

Moksha :- As we have already said Dharma, Artha and Kama are only means to an end-Moksha. One must observe one's Swadharma according to one's caste, state and stage (Varna and Varnashrama Dharma). Keeping Dharma in view one must accumulate Artha and not losing sight of Dharma again one must enjoy the accumulated Artha, but eventually, one must make an all-out effort to attain Moksha. Human life is very precious - it is very hard to get human birth. It is said in the Scriptures that a Jiva (Soul) attains human birth after taking eighty lakhs of births and deaths, i. e., thirty lakhs of births and deaths as immovable things, eleven lakhs of births and deaths as germs, ten lakhs of births and deaths as birds, nine lakhs of births and deaths as aquatic animals, twenty lakhs of births and deaths as terrestrial animals and four lakhs of births and deaths as human beings. Even after attaining human birth, it is very rare to get a good physique, male birth and clear intellect. When a man gets all these things, he must find out a Guru (a man who has realized the Atman or God) and devote his time in attaining Moksha (Freedom). To miss this rare opportunity means irreparable loss and one has to suffer much for the misuse of the opportunity.

Now let us see what is meant by Moksha and how it can be attained. Different schools of thought give different versions of Moksha. According to the Dwaita (School of Duality) school of thought, the Jiva (Self) attains perfection and lives eternally with God in heaven. It, then, possesses all the powers except those of creation, preservation and destruction. These powers always remain with God. According to the Visishta-Adwaita school of thought, the individual Soul attains perfection and remains as a part and parcel of God eternally in Vaikunta (heaven). And according to the Adwaita school of thought, the individual Soul merges Itself in the Brahman, i. e., in the Supreme Being and becomes one with It. Then there is no difference between the Jiva and Shiva (individual Self and the Supreme Self). There is no difference between the Akasa (ether) inside a pot and outside. It is the same all-pervading Akasa which is inside the pot also. So long as the pot remains, there seems to be a difference and they are not two kinds of Akasa. Likewise, the All-pervading, Supreme Self living inside a living body is called Jiva and an ignorant man identifying himself with the transient body and the senses divides himself and forgets the Supreme Self. When this apparent illusion of the mind is cleared, one perceives the Supreme Self in all Its Glory and Splendour. Thus, according to the Adwaita school of thought the merging of the lower Self into the higher Self is called Moksha.

Imagine a salt doll under making a journey with a view of finding out the depth of the ocean. It sees the ocean from a distance and exclaims with woder "Oh what a wonderful thing the ocean is! How vast and wide it is! How much water it contains! Water, water everywhere, without any limit! etc." The salt doll resumes its journey and reaches the ocean and drinks a little of the ocean water and exclaims, "Oh what a wonder! The water of the ocean is saltish. The ocean is salt in liquid form and I am salt in solid form. There is actually not much difference between the water of the ocean and myself. We are one in essence." Then, the salt doll enters the ocean. But no sooner does it do so than it dissolves completely in the water of the ocean and becomes one with the ocean. It loses its identity completely.

Dwaita is like the starting point of the journey from where the ocean is perceived by the salt doll from a distance. A man under duality perceives God from a distance as it were. He admires Him, adores Him, and worships Him with great love, respect and reverence. He praises His glory. He takes His name and prays to Him for help and right guidance. A man of Dwaita always keeps God as a separate entity apart from himself. He will never identify himself with God. For him identification with God will be a blasphemy. The man of Dwaita, like the salt doll proceeding to the ocean and then tasting the ocean water, makes headway spiritually and tastes a little of the Divine Bliss. He understands that he is not the perishing body and the senses. He perceives the eternity of the Jivatman, but still he perceives the Jivatman (individual Self) and the Paramatman (the All-pervading Self) as two identities although he realises that the Jivatman is a part of Paramatman and the Jivatman has its roots in the Paramatman, and without the Paramatman the Jivatman cannot exist. This is the state of man of Visishta-Adwaita Bhava (thought). In Adwaita Bhava (state or thought) like the merging of the salt doll in the ocean-the Jiva merges in the ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute). Here, in this state, the ideas of subject, object and knowledge are lost completely and what remains is the thing in Itself or by Itself or the Ocean of Consciousness by Itself.

How can Moksha be attained by man? Is it possible? Is it practicable? Can a man living amidst the stress and strain of this world attain Moksha? So and so forth. Many such doubts and questions do creep up in the mind of an ordinary worldling.

Broadly speaking, the mind has four main faculties, viz., willing, feeling, thinking and gathering (the tendency to concentrate). All these four faculties are working constantly in the mind of a man. Though all the faculties work in the mind, all of them are not equally developed in an average man. In the vast majority of beings any one of the faculties predominates over the other three. And according to this predominating faculty of the mind, the man selects his path. And based on these four prevailing faculties of the mind the Rishis (Seers) of ancient India have given four main paths leading to Moksha, i. e., Karma-Yoga to willing faculty, Bhakti-Yoga to feeling faculty, Jnana-Yoga to thinking faculty and Raja-Yoga to gathering faculty. Any man, even a householder, who follows the path sincerely according to the predominating faculty of his mind reaches the Goal. Moksha is the common property of each and every man or woman. He who aspires after it, he who searches for it, gets it. As Freedom is the birth right of every man and woman, it cannot be denied to anyone. But as people have taken the perverted course, and have forgotten their true nature, they suffer bondage and misery. God or Moksha is like the centre of a circle and the different paths are like the different radii that meet at the centre of a circle. We shall now deal with each path in detail in the pages that follow.

IV

KARMA-YOGA

The word "Karma" is a Sanskrit word. Karma means work or action. As such, every work is Karma. Eating is Karma. Drinking is Karma. Sleeping is Karma. Speaking is Karma. Walking is Karma. Reading is Karma. Seeing is Karma. Hearing is Karma. As a matter of fact even the very heart beat is Karma. The word "Karma" has a deeper meaning also. It means the destiny forged by one in the past or being forged in the present birth, according to one's desires, thoughts, tastes, tendencies, habits, and acts, which determine the future life's heredity, environment, ability and effort. It also means one's Varna and Varnasharama's duty or Dharma.

Then what is meant by Yoga?

(1) The word "Yoga" comes from the root "Jung". Gungere means the joining of any two things or numbers.

(2) In arithmetic, it means addition and subtraction.

(3) In astronomy, it means the conjunction of planets and stars.

(4) In grammer, it means the joining of letters and words.

(5) In Nayaya, it means the power of the parts taken together.

(6) In Mimamsa, it means the force conveyed by the united members of a sentence.

(7) As per Patanjali, it means the suppression of mental functions.

(8) According to Buddhists, it means the abstraction of the mind from all objects.

(9) In Vedanta, it means the union of the Soul with the Supreme Spirit.

(10) According to Yoga system, it means the joining of the vital spirit with the Soul.

(11) In Gita, it means the performance of actions without attachment and remaining unconcerned as regards success or failure, pleasure or pain, gain or loss, etc., or, in one word, it means the evenness of the mind.

(12) Every process of meditation is also called Yoga.

(13) According to Vaiseshika, it means the fixing of the attention on only one subject by abstracting it from all others.

(14) According to Visishta Adwaita (Ramanuja),

it means the seeking of one's particular Deity (Istha Devata).

(15) According to some Buddhists, it means the seeking of one's object of desire.

(16) According to some others, it means searching for every desirable object.

(17) In rhetoric, it means the union of the lovers.

(18) In medicine, it means the compounding of drugs.

(19) In Yoga Vasishta, it is the technical term given to the practice of Self-realization. (a) Literally, it means union. (b) It means deep affirmation of the One Reality. (c) It means control of the mind. (d) It means stopping of the movements of the Vital currents (Prana). (e) It is any device to obtain release.

(20) It also means reaching the imperceptible with visible experience.

(21) The practical side of religion.

(22) The union of two external objects.

(23) The mixing of one thing with another.

(24) The inter-relation of causes which produce a common effect.

(25) The orderly equipment of a soldier or of any person in any profession is called Yoga.

(26) The application and discrimination that is necessary for the discovery of a certain truth.

(27) The power of sound which makes it convey the specific idea.

(28) The preservation of what one possesses.

(29) The transformation of one thing into another is called Yoga.

(30) The union of the Soul with the Universal Spirit is called Yoga.

(31) The continuous flow of thought-currents towards an object is called Yoga.

(32) The restraint of all thought-currents by meditation and concentration is called Yoga.

So the word "Yoga" includes all the different branches of learning such as art, science, psychology, philosophy, religion, etc.

But for our purpose the word "Yoga" means unity, i. e. , the unity of Shakti with Shiva or the Unity of the Jivatman with the Paramatman. The Unity between man and God, between mind and the Self and between Atman and Brahman is called Yoga. The means and the ways adopted to gain this unity, and the means that facilitates one to realize one's own True Nature is called Yoga. Perfect equilibrium of the mind under all the pairs of opposites and under all circumstances is called Yoga. To take all the pairs of opposites in the same light is called Yoga. To go beyond the three Gunas (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) and to go beyond the idea of all the pairs of opposites is called Yoga. The means and ways that lead to God-realization is called Yoga. Deep concentration of the mind is called Yoga. So, Karma-Yoga means concentration of the mind through work which leads to God-realization or Freedom. To control and to concentrate the mind through work is called Karma-Yoga. The means, the device or the skill of giving up of hope and expectation which are the causes of unhappiness and bondage is called Karma-Yoga. The method of work or the way to escape bondage through selfless work is called Karma-Yoga. Karma-Yoga means dexterity in work. It means that plan of conduct which ensures the working out of one's past Karma without making room for new Karma and the realization of the Atman by putting the whole of one's will in work. In this Yoga, one performs all actions without attachment and without any desire for the fruits thereof.

The mind of an ordinary man is scattered owing to its attachment to multifarious objects. A part of the mind of a married man goes to his wife and children, another part is being occupied by lust, anger, greed, pride, jealousy, selfishness etc., and still another part gets attached to name and fame, wealth, friends, kith and kin. So the mind of an average man becomes very weak and helpless. The cause of slavery and bondage is attachment. Then, is it a sin to love one's wife, children, parents, kith and kin? Is it a sin to amass wealth by fair means? Is it a sin to make a name and to win fame by a lawful means? No, not in the least. A householder has to love his wife and children. He has to love and serve his parents, kith and kin. He has to amass wealth and he has to make a name and earn fame by fair means, but at the same time he has to relinquish the desire for and attachment to everything.

So long as one lives in this world one has to do work. Even for the bare maintenance of one's body one has to do work. And, as such, Karma (work) can never be avoided. One has to do work and that work, every bit of it must be done with full concentration of the mind and at the same time to be perfectly nonattached to the results of the work done. When you work, do it whole-heartedly, Put your whole mind, heart and will in the work and at the same time do not expect, do not hanker after anything in return. The desire and the expectation for the fruits of our actions rob away the peace of our minds. On the other hand, if one shuns all desires for the fruits of actions and does work for work's sake, one can have perfect peace and balance of mind.

Is the world separate from God? What is meant by the words "The world is false and God alone is real?" The world is not separate from God. God is in everything and He is everywhere. What is meant by the unreality of the world is that the world of names and forms is false. It is ever changing and impermanent. The names and forms undergo constant change. Remove the names and forms from this universe, what remains is God and God alone. The idea of "I" and "Mine" is bondage, it constitutes this world. This idea is verily the hell. It is the cause of attachment and of untold miseries. Keeping this one idea of "I" and "Mine" one builds up a mighty empire for oneself in this world. So long as this idea of "Mine" remains in a person, so long as this dirty ego remains stubborn in a person, one suffers hell-fire in this very life. There is no greater bondage, there is no greater pain and there is no greater sin than this idea of "I" and "Mine". The idea of "I" and "Mine" is the cause of all pains, all miseries, all sins, and bondage. This idea of "I" and "Mine" is at the root of all evils. Selfishness, lust, greed, hatred, jealousy, etc., creep up in the mind of a person on account of this idea of "I" and "Mine". So long as this idea remains in a person, one is far removed from Freedom. There is no hope of Freedom for such a person. So, Karma-Yoga says kill and root out this nasty idea. It says, "In the place of "I" and "Mine" always keep in view the idea of "Thou" and "Thine". Do every bit of work for the sake of God. Eat for God. Drink for God. Sleep for God. Nay! let the very heart-beat be for God and God alone." No doubt, it is a difficult thing to practice this. For the mind and the ego deceive a man in a variety of ways. But there is no other way, no other alternative except to kill the puny ego idea. One has to work and at the same time, to fight out the ego idea. By and by, one will be able to eradicate the ego idea and see and perceive the Divine Hand in and through every act. Rome was not built in a day. Right path and steady effort smoothen the way and one becomes successful.

A householder has got his duty towards his wife, and children, father and mother, kith and kin, the race and the country. He must maintain in a fair way and by fair means his wife, children, parents, etc. He has to attend to business, and to earn money in an honest way and a part of that money must be utilized in helping the poor, the sick and the helpless. As a householder, one has to love one's country and to work for it. One must attend to different kinds of work and do every bit of work with love, care and attention. One must never neglect any work and at the same time never get attached to any work. One's attitude while attending to different kinds of work must be like that of a faithful maid-servant. The maid-servant of a rich man takes the children of the latter and hugs them to her bosom with utmost tenderness and love, with the words "My Gopal" My Lalita, etc." Though the maid-servant uses the word "My Gopal", etc., she knows in the heart of her hearts that the children belong to her master and if on the next day, she is dismissed for any reason whatsoever she will leave the house at once and go somewhere else in search of a job. Likewise, one must act in this world. One may use the words "My wife", "My children", "My parents", etc., overtly, but covertly one must know that everything belongs to the Lord and that one is only a servant of the servants of the Lord. As a true maid-servant takes care of her master's property, house and children, in like manner one must take care of one's wife, children, parents, etc. One's duty is only to carry out the behests of the Lord. So try to keep the Lord always in view and do every bit of work for Him and Him alone. Never forget the Lord even for a single second. Keep this idea always in front and do every bit of work for the sake of God and taking it to be His work. Impress the mind with this one basic idea and engage yourself in work.

Never shrink from doing any work that comes to you unsought for. Face boldly every bit of work as it comes of its own accord and do it. Do not stop to make your selection and thus give place to egoism. Never grumble over anything. Never try to evade any work that falls to your lot. Never get afraid of and run away from work. This is mere cowardice and means a great fall. A true Karma-Yogi will not be afraid of any kind of work. For, he knows that he has no selection to make and whatever work comes to him, either good or bad, he has to take it as God-sent and his duty is to face it boldly and to work it out to his entire satisfaction. A man who resigns himself completely to the working of the Divine-will, sees the Divine Hand behind all the pairs of opposites. Besides this, if we go deep, we will understand that not a single act is absolutely good or absolutely bad in itself. Every act is a mixture of good and bad and so also its result. But it is the motive, the attitude of the doer, that counts more than anything else. If any work is done in the right spirit and with a right understanding, it will not bind a man, and he will be free from its effects. The wrong attitude or motive brings the undesired effects and bondage. A priest worships God in a temple in a lukewarm way without faith and attention, while a Shudra does the sweeper's work with great love, care and attention, and takes that menial work as a sort of worship and does every bit of it as if that were the Lord's work. Who is the superior man between these two? Which of them is dearer to God? Surely the latter is far superior and much dearer to God than the former.

Once, two friends started from their houses with the object of visiting a cinema hall and then a house of ill-fame. On their way they saw a religious congregation where a Pandit (learned man) was delivering a lecture on religion. One of the two friends went to the religious congregation while the other made straight to the cinema hall and then to a prostitute. The man who went to the religious class and lecture got disgusted but he was not in a position to leave the place. So in his mind, he began to think thus–"What a fool I am! Why did I come here instead of keeping to my original programme? The holy Scriptures and their teachings are nothing but fraud, they are meant for drones. How wise my friend has been! He has kept his programme and after enjoying the cinema pictures he will enjoy the embraces of a beautiful damsel." On the contrary, the other friend who went to the cinema hall and to the prostitute began to revolve in his mind thus–"What have I done today? Oh what a shameful thing it is! I have committed adultery. I have committed sin. How wise my friend has been! He has attended the religious gathering." Thinking thus he repented sincerely and prayed to God fervently with a travail heart to forgive him his sins and to guide him ever on the right path. Which of the two friends was the real sinner? Verily the man who went to the religious congregation got the sin of visiting the cinema hall and the house of ill-fame while the man who actually enjoyed the pictures and the young woman got the merit of visiting the religious congregation. It is the motive behind, or the attitude of one's mind that counts more than anything else.

The discourse of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita begins with Arjuna's refusal to fight a rightful war and to kill his own kith and kin. But Sri Krishna with his long discourse on various points illumines and convinces Arjuna of his delusion in understanding the spirit of his own Dharma and makes him to fight the battle of Kurukshetra. Sri Krishna says to Arjuna, "O Arjuna, whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest in sacrifice, whatever thou givest away, whatever austerity thou practisest do that as an offering unto Me. Thus shalt thou be freed from the bondages of actions, bearing good and evil results. With thy heart steadfast in the Yoga of renunciation, and thus liberated thou shall come unto Me. If thou art unable to practice Abhyasa, be thou intent on doing actions for My sake, and thou shalt attain perfection. If thou art unable to do even this, then taking refuge in Me,-and self-controlled, abandon the fruit of action. Even doing all actions but taking refuge in Me,-by My grace thou wilt attain the eternal, immutable state. Resigning mentally all deeds to Me and having Me as thy highest Goal and resorting to Buddhi-Yoga, do thou ever fix thy mind on Me."

In these words Sri Krishna makes Arjuna understand that every work is a mixture of good and bad effects. And the only way to escape from the effects of work is non-attachment, renunciation of the fruits of action by taking every action as that of God. This is the only way to escape from the bondage of Karma.

In Gita Sri Krishna also says to Arjuna, "To work you have the right but not to the fruits thereof." What does Sri Krishna mean by this advice? Is it possible to work without hankering and without desiring for the fruits of action? Yes, it is. It is the desire for or the hankering after the fruits of action that binds a man to work. It is the desire and the anxiety for and expectation of the fruits of action that make the mind restless and rob it of its peace. This anxiety alone is the cause of fear, bondage and of untold miseries. This desire or anxiety for the fruits of action is based on egoism. So every work must be done as worship without expecting anything in return and without craving for its fruit. Let the fruit, let the result take care of itself. Leave the fruit with the Lord. Offer, dedicate sincerely, every bit of your work and its fruit unto the Hallowed Lotus feet of the Lord. Let Him do as He thinks best. One reaps, what one sows.

One gets the fruit according to the intensity of one's faith. Good works bear good fruit and bad ones bear bad fruit. As we have said already, every work is a mixture of good and bad effects and he who desires good has to face bad also. But he who does not expect anything is alone free from taking the good and bad effects of a work. So, a Karma-Yogi's duty is to do every work for work's sake fully depending on the Lord. His duty is to carry out the behests of the Lord by doing every bit of a work that falls to his lot without any drawback from his side. While doing any work one must put one's whole mind and heart into it and when the work is done, there ends one's responsibility. One must not worry about anything else. When every kind of work is done with this attitude of mind, it fetches the highest kind of result.

The lotus grows in mud and water, but it is not soiled by mud and water, A boat may be kept safely in deep water but we should not allow water to get inside the boat. That will be disastrous as that will make the boat sink down. Likewise, one must live in this world but the world should not live in one's mind. That will be dangerous. It will bring bondage and suffering. So, it is the attachment to the mundane objects of the senses and of this world that binds a man. It is the attachment that drags one down to the mire of bondage. A person must live in this world but the world should not live in him. One must live unattached like the lotus leaf. If one can get rid of this attachment one is free in this very life. One must always act like a master without any attachment to anything. To get attached to anything means becoming a slave to that particular thing. Such a man can never enjoy Freedom and Bliss.

Karma-Yoga does not deny God-realization to a householder. It says that all can reach the Ultimate Goal provided all adopt proper methods and take the right path. The Dharma of a householder differs from that of a recluse. Again, the idea of Dharma varies with different nations and sects. Whatever may the conception of Dharma and whatever may be the understanding of an ideal life, Karma-Yoga preaches one to be sincere to one's Swadharma. This faith, this sincerity, and this attitude of following tenaciously to one's Swadharma is essential. In Gita, Sri Krishna says, "Oh Arjuna, everyman devoted to his or to her own duty, attains the highest perfection. From Whom the evolution of all beings is, by Whom all creation is pervaded, worshipping Him with his own duty, a man attains perfection. Better is one's own Dharma, though imperfect, than the Dharma of another well-performed. He who does the duty ordained by his own nature incurs no evil. One should not relinquish, O son of Kunti, the duty to which one is born, though it is attended by evil, for all undertakings are enveloped by evil, as fire is by smoke. He, whose intellect is unattached everywhere, who has subdued his heart, whose desires have fled, he attains to the Supreme perfection, consisting of freedom from action by renunciation."

Karma-Yoga does not advice a married man to retire into forest in search of Truth and become a recluse. It does not give room to a householder to leave behind helpless, his wife, children and the parents and renounce the world. If one does this, it is an unpardonable sin. Such a man can never make headway spiritually and reach the Final Goal. This kind of renunciation is most irrational and contrary to one's Swadharma. This act is nothing but evading one's responsibility owing to improper understanding of one's Dharma and owing to cowardice. This is nothing but weakness and worse than death. It is not by running away from work that one can escape work. One has to face everything boldly, and work it out depending fully on God. This is the only way to free oneself from bondage.

Once a Sannyasin retired into a forest for doing penance (Tapasya). He lived in a deep forest underneath a tree, eating roots and jungle fruits. Thus he spent many long years in penance and he got certain supernatural powers. One day when he was in meditation, a crow and a crane began fighting on the tree top under which the Yogi was meditating. The fight of the birds disturbed the meditation of the Yogi and, out of anger he looked up at the fighting birds and they were immediately converted into ashes. Seeing his extraordinary power, he got puffed up and desired to go to the world and become popular by the aid of this supernatural power.

With this object in view, he left the forest and went to a close-by village, and as he felt hungry, he went to a house and asked for alms. In that house there lived a couple, and the wife was serving the husband who was ill in bed. In response to the mendicant's call, she requested him to tarry a little as she was very busy with her duty to her husband. The recluse took this request as an insult and looked angrily at the woman with the object of turning her into ashes.

But the woman understood the motive of the Sadhu and she rebuked him with the words, "My son, you need not be proud of your supernatural powers. Here is neither the crow nor the crane that you will convert into ashes." The Yogi was much astonished and rather taken aback on hearing the words of the woman and on seeing the failure of his supernatural powers. For, how could she check his powers and at the same time understand the crow and the crane incident? When he turned them into ashes, no body witnessed it as the incident took place in the deep forest. Now having got a good snubbing to his egotism at the hands of this woman, the Yogi wanted to know how she could understand his secret doings amidst the forest. So he waited for the woman. After attending fully, with a devoted heart to her husband's comforts she went to the Sadhu (mendicant) with food in hand. The Sadhu requested her just to tell him how she could check his miraculous powers and understand the incident of killing the crow and the crane that took place in a lonely and far off place. The woman spoke to the Yogi thus: "My son, I do not know much about your Yoga or of Scriptures. I observe chastity and know how to work without attachment and without hankering after fruits of action. When I was a virgin, I loved and served my parents and kith and kin whole-heartedly. But in return I never expected anything from anybody. Besides this, I had no hatred to any living being. I always loved one and all. I had no pride, no jealousy and no hankering for anything and I was always truthful and observed perfect Brahmacharya. Now, I am married and I serve my husband whole-heartedly with love and devotion. I take him as the very embodiment of God. I have not seen the face of any other man with a carnal eye. I observe perfect chastity in thought, word and deed. This observance of chastity and this non-attachment to work and the desirelessness to the fruit thereof have made me realize the highest Truth. If you desire to know something more about the secrets of Karma-Yoga you can go to the adjoining village. There, in that place, lives a butcher and he will teach you more about it."

Now, the mendicant was very anxious to see the butcher and saluting the chaste woman he left for the adjoining village in his search. He recognised the butcher from a distance. He saw the cut and skinned animals hanging and people gathered to purchase meat and the butcher very busy in buying and selling meat. The Sadhu felt disgusted. He thought "What am I to learn from a beast like him! He is a most abominable man. What can he know about religion? And what can he teach me about the Final Truth?" As the mendicant was thus revolving in his mind, the butcher looked at him from a distance and called out to him, saying: "Halloo! you have come here in search of me. And that chaste woman has directed you to this place. Please come and take your seat." On hearing these words of the butcher the Sadhu got perplexed and his ego received a further shock. Anyway, since he wanted to know the truth and the secret further, he went and took his seat as directed by the butcher. After making the Yogi sit down, the butcher went on with his work till midday deeply absorbed in it. When the time came for the shop to be closed he counted the money, entered it in the register, placed it and other important things under lock and key and, closing the shop, requested the mendicant to come with him to his house. The Sadhu followed the butcher, and when they reached his home, the butcher offered a seat to the mendicant, made him sit, went inside his house, helped his aged father and mother to their bath and meals. After meals be made them take rest and then himself took his bath. After offering food, etc., to the Sadhu they both began to converse on religion. The Yogi asked the butcher why he performed that henious job, when he was a man of God-realization. In answer the butcher informed the Sadhu that he was born in the family of a butcher and it was his duty to do that work. And by doing the butcher's work without attachment, and without hankering after the fruit thereof and by doing every action as an offering, as a worship unto God, he had realized the Highest Truth. He also told him that with the right attitude and by a proper understanding of the spirit of Karma-Yoga one can reach the Ultimate Goal. He continued: "Caste, creed, or sex, does not stand in the way of God-realization. A priest, a soldier, a merchant, or a sweeper can attain Freedom, or realize God by attending to his respective Swadharma with full concentration of the mind and without hankering after the fruit of action and without attachment to anything. A Karma-Yogi has to observe Brahmacharya after begetting one or two children just to keep up his line of heritage. Brahmacharya is sin qua non of God-realization. Without establishing oneself in perfect Brahmacharya, one cannot make headway spiritually. Besides this, one must be truthful, honest, and kind to all living beings. A priest may worship God in a shrine but if he fails to observe Brahmacharya and if he is dishonest, tells lies and swindles others, he is worse than a sweeper or a butcher. On the other hand, a soldier fighting for his country, a trader attending to business or a sweeper cleaning the street, if he is honest, truthful, kind to all beings and chaste, he is far better than the priest. So it is not the caste, creed or sex that brings God-realization, but it is sincerity, it is the attitude of the mind in doing a work that counts more than anything else. Renunciation of the Kamya Karmas (work with desires), non-attachment to the actions and non-expectation of the fruits of actions is what is meant by Sannyasa. Mere change of garb, mere change of name, mere change in the place of living, i. e., from a house in a city or village to a hut in a forest will not bring God-realization nearer. What is wanted is a real change and the spirit of non-attachment in the mind. Internal change is absolutely necessary. No doubt the external formalities and observances help a person to a certain extent but the main thing is the internal observance. A person who has no desires in the mind, and one who is a master of his senses and the mind is a true Sannyasi and a far superior man to one who only observes external formalities. He who has control over the mind and the senses and he who has developed the internal spirit of non-attachment to any work or object can live anywhere in this world, untarnished by anything like lotus leaf in water. Nothing can bind and nothing can soil such a person." With these words the butcher concluded his advice and the Sadhu took the advice sincerely, became wiser, left his egoistic feelings and after saluting the butcher went to the forest for doing penance over again.

So, one must live in the world and work like a master but never like a slave. The first thing one has to learn in Karma-Yoga is the art and the power of detachment. A person who knows how to detach himself at will from any object or thing is always safe. One lives in this world amidst the objects of love and hate, but at the same time one must know how to detach oneself from these objects at will. Enjoy beauty for the sake of beauty. But no sooner does that beautiful object disappear or is removed then one should not feel it, nor hanker after it and become miserable without it. A Karma-Yogi must always keep his mind in perfect balance in weal or woe and under all the pairs of opposites. One should never get elated with success or with the beautiful objects nor should one feel sorry in failures or with disagreeable objects and things. To love an object without knowing the art of detachment is ruinous and sinful and it leads to bondage. Bondage brings misery. Any act that brings misery as its fruit is not Karma-Yoga. The fruit of Karma-Yoga is always happy and elevating. To love or to hate or to get attached to any work or object or the willful avoidance of any work is injurious. One must face everything boldly like a great master. In attending to the multifarious actions of this world one must attend to them carefully but at the same time one should never let a strong impression to be created in the mind. One must act like a witness. If a person can succeed in doing an act without creating any strong impression in his mind, he is not bound by the fruit of that action. Attachment or aversion to an act creates a strong impression in the mind. To love a thing or to hate a thing means giving a strong impression of the thing to the mind.

Suppose a man goes to a city from his village home. On the way to the city the man sees a variety of things, persons and scenes. He sees one thing, enjoys it but forgets it with the appearance of another object. Thus he goes on seeing numerous objects and reaches the city. In the city he sees crowds of men, women, children, shops, cars, trams, etc. One by one he goes on witnessing them. Amidst this changing scene, all of a sudden he sees his most beloved friend after a long lapse of time. The friend also sees the man. The man runs to his bosom friend and embraces him with overwhelming joy. The friends enjoy each other's company for some minutes and then depart to attend to their respective business. After finishing his work in the city the man goes back to his house in the evening. On reaching home he forgets the faces of thousands of men, women, and children seen in the city. He forgets the multifarious other objects seen on the way and in the city, but the memory of the beloved friend and the few minutes spent in his joyful company remain with him vividly. Why is it so? The man has seen numerous men, women, and children and some of them may have been more beautiful than his friend, but still he forgets them all except his friend. This is, because his love and attachment to other people is not so great as to his friend. He enjoys the beauties of men, women and other objects as a witness. He does not get attached to them. Hence, the impression given to the mind is not strong. In the other case, the man loves the friend very much and gets attached to him and this love and attachment creates a strong impression in his mind.

Suppose the same man goes to a shop to purchase certain articles. The shopkeeper deceives the man and behaves very rudely towards him. The man picks up a quarrel with the shopkeeper and makes a complaint to the police and, with their aid, gets the dispute settled. The man feels very sad and feels pain at heart for the dishonesty and the rough behaviour of the shopkeeper and when he goes back to his home, he forgets all other things and all the men, women and children seen in the city, but the surly face of the shopkeeper lives vivid in his memory. Here, like intense love, intense hatred has given a strong impression to the mind. As love and attachment create strong impressions in the mind, so also aversion and hatred create strong impressions in the mind. Thus every work must be done like a witness without love, attachment, aversion or hatred. If one can do work according to this principle and ideal, then no work can bind a man. No work can produce any effect. Then every act becomes a great help towards attaining the Ultimate Goal.

It is not the work, it is not the external act that binds a man but it is the internal motive that counts. Any act by itself is neither absolutely good nor absolutely bad. As a matter of fact every act is a mixture of good and bad. Any act which we call good has a bad aspect also. Similarly any act which we call bad has a good side also. But then, if the major portion of an act is good, then we call such an act as good work and if the major portion of the act is bad, we call it as a bad act. With all that, good and bad effect of an act always go side by side. Cause and effect,Karma and Karma-Phala cannot be avoided. Every cause is followed by its effect. Every work is followed by its fruit. Good acts bring good fruit and bad one's bring bad fruit. Happiness and misery, enjoyment and suffering that we see in this world are the effects of the past good and bad acts of the beings. Good and bad acts both bind the embodied. They are like gold and iron chains. And both of the chains gold and iron can be used to bind a man tightly.

Again, the same act which is good at one time may be bad at another time and under changed circumstance. To eat and to drink heat-producing food and drinks, and to use chimney fire and warm clothing in winter and in cold places are good, healthy and necessary. But to use the same kind of food and drink and to use chimney fire and warm clothing in summer and in hot places will be bad and injurious to health. Though the acts are the same, the fruits under different circumstances differ. Say for example, a doctor attends on a young woman who is seriously ill and he has to examine the various parts of the woman to diagnose the disease. But obsessed with feelings of delicacy, if he gives up thorough examination, the doctor grossly neglects his duty. He fails to diagnose the disease and becomes the cause of the death of the woman and thereby he commits great sin. On the other hand if he does examine her thoroughly, he does a very good act and immense service to the woman and such an act fetches the highest kind of merit. But the same doctor in touching and seeing the different parts of the body of the same woman with a carnal eye, when the latter is in normal health, will commit sin and he will be guilty of adultery. Here, though the act is the same the motive behind differs, so also the fruit.

A father kisses his daughter out of pure paternal love. The same man kisses his wife also. Though the act of kissing is the same, the motive behind differs. The former is based on pure love and the latter is based on carnality. So the fruit of an act differs as per the motive behind. When any act or service is properly done in different fields of activity such as in education, social upliftment, religion, philosophy, national service, etc., without any selfish motive, without hankering after name and fame and without expecting the fruit of action and when every act is done with detachment as work for work's sake, such an act fetches the highest good and leads one to Moksha.

In conclusion, life in this world means a struggle. Without work and without effort no one can live in this world. For the bare maintenance of the body one has to work and that work as we have seen, is a mixture of good and bad effects. Every work brings or produces good and bad fruits. He who desires merit and good fruit of an act must also expect and take demerit and bad fruit of the same act. So long as the body survives in this world there is no end to work and there is no end to their effects also. For example, take a mango seed. With the mango seed as the cause, we get the tree as its effect. The mango tree in turn becomes the cause, and, as an effect, we get numerous mango seeds. In turn, the mango seeds become the cause and thus the circle moves and we have millions of mango seeds becoming the cause and millions of mango trees as effect. The cause and its effect, or Karma and Karma-Phala go on multiplying like a mango tree and its seeds. One single act as a cause produces as its effect some more acts and those acts becoming causes produce innumerable acts as their effects. Then how to escape from the fetters of Karma-Phala? By detachment alone. As has been said already, it is the idea of "I" and "Mine" that binds a being. While doing any work one must leave off and eradicate the very idea of being a doer and should never hanker after or expect either good or bad fruit of the act done. Be indifferent to the results of your work. When you do a work never expect anything. Good or bad, whatever it may be, leave it unto the Hands of God. Work for work's sake. As soon as you finish the work, your responsibility ends there. Let there be no worry, no impatience on your part. When every work is done with this attitude, it will cleanse the heart and mind and will fetch the highest kind of reward. The desire for the fruit of an act brings worry and anxiety and it robs away the peace of mind. The worried man, the restless man, the egoistic man can never enjoy sound physical and mental health. These anxieties and worries and the consequent restlessness bring on disease, premature decay and death. So the best thing to do to avoid all sorts of dangers, calamities and catastrophies is to depend on God fully, and to do every work as it befalls to your lot with full concentration of the mind taking it to be God-sent and at the same time never expecting the merit or demerit of the act done. Besides this, a Karma-Yogi must be always truthful, honest and sincere. He must regulate his life. He must avoid gossip and unnecessary talking and thus waste of time. A Karma-Yogi must exercise control over his speech, food and senses. He must be regular in work and respite. Above all, he must observe Brahmacharya in thought, word and deed, after begetting one or two children just to keep up the line of heritage. Brahmacharya is absolutely necessary to gain the strength of mind, the strength of body and to understand and to follow the spirit of Dharma and to tread assiduously along the long path of Karma-Yoga.

V

BHAKTI-YOGA

The second process by which one can attain the Final Goal is Bhakti-Yoga. A person in whom the feeling faculty predominates takes up Bhakti-Yoga. Bhakti means love and Yoga means the union. So Bhakti-Yoga means the union of the Jivatman (Individual Self) and Paramatman (Supreme Self) through love. To realize God through devotion and worship is called Bhakti-Yoga. Any kind of love is not Bhakti-Yoga. A young man loves intensily a young beautiful woman and vice versa. A husband loves his wife and both of them, their children. Children love their parents. Brothers and sisters love one other. A good servant loves his master. A good man loves his friends, kith and kin. A worldly-minded man likes sense-pleasures, name and fame. A miser loves money more than anything else. All these kinds of love are not called Bhakti-Yoga. Behind these kinds of love there is selfishness, there is lust or carnality. These kinds of love do not liberate a man. On the other

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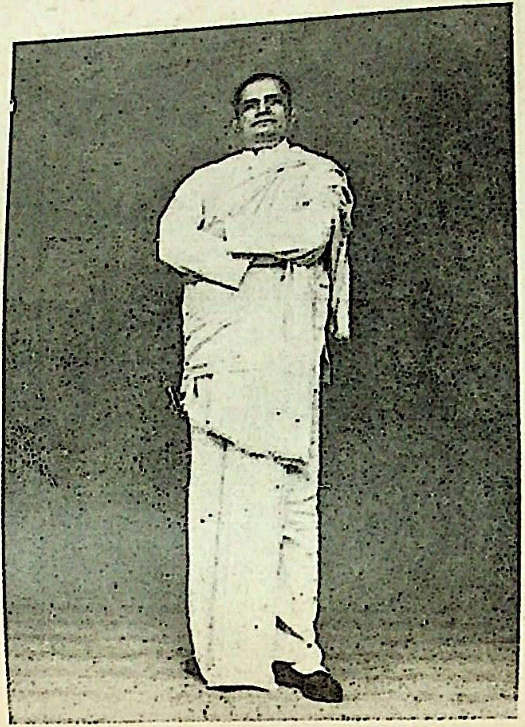

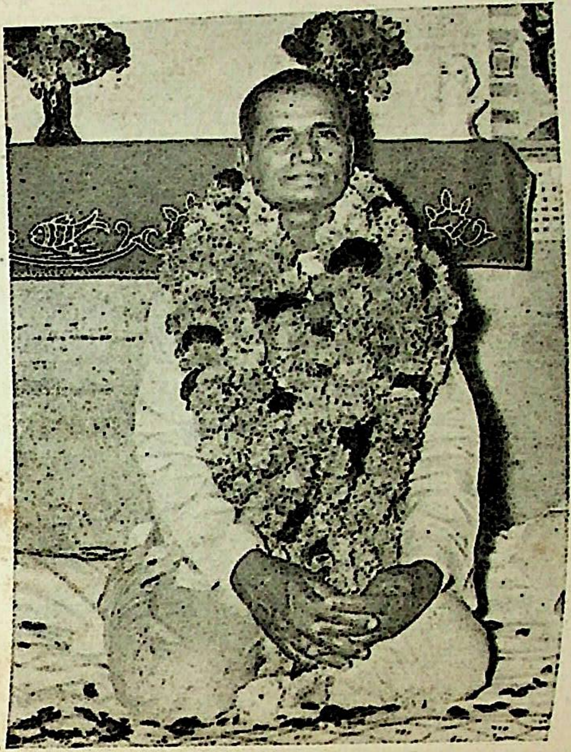

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hand, they bind one fast to ignorance and bondage. Bhakti-Yoga means the concentration of the mind with pure selfless love. Love for love's sake is called Bhakti-Yoga. Pure love knows no fear, no hatred and no barter. While walking in a street, a young woman gets frightened when a dog barks at her. But the same woman will face a ferocious bull or a ruffian in saving the life of her only darling, when the latter's life is in danger at their hands. Here, it is the pure love of the mother for her child that makes her fearless. It is the pure and unselfish love that makes her face the ferocious bull or the ruffian and prepares her to sacrifice her own life. In Bhakti-Yoga, one loves the Lord without the least sort of fear, taking Him to be his nearest and dearest and without the least desire for any personal gain. Such a devotee or such a love is free from the ego idea and has no ulterior motives or selfishness behind. The second quality of pure unselfish love is that it knows no hatred. The mother loves her children. When a child goes wrong or when a child does mischief, she chastises the child. With all that, she does not hate the child. She loves the child passionately and even the chastisement she administers is out of sheer love—with the object of putting the child on the right path. So in Bhakti-Yoga a person always loves the Lord. He can never hate the Lord. The third thing pure love possesses is that it knows no barter. It is love for love's sake. It always gives and expects not anything in return. Such a person knows only to love the Lord without expecting anything in return. He loves the Lord without knowing or even caring to know what he loves Him for. See the mother's love towards her suckling. What an amount of suffering and inconvenience does she undergo for the sake of her baby! She bears all sufferings patiently and renders free service unto her baby willingly. For all this service she does not expect anything in return from the child. So, pure love only knows how to love its beloved without the least sort of expectation in return. A Bhakta or a devotee of Bhakti-Yoga loves his Lord always without expecting anything. He does not care even for Moksha. He always wants to live with his Beloved, love his Beloved, regard and worship his Beloved. He is never worried about his own troubles and tribulations, pains and pleasures. He does not grumble over his misfortunes. Whatever comes to his lot, weal or woe, comes from his Beloved. Hence, everything is sweet to him. He has no selection, no choice to make.

He faces all the pairs of opposites as God-sent. He does not get elated by success, and is not in drooping spirits in failure. For he depends completely upon the Divine-will. His attitude is like that of a dry leaf. When wind comes from the North the dry leaf is carried to the South. And when a strong breeze blows from the South the dry leaf is carried back to North again. Likewise, a true devotee does not exercise his free will, but, on the other hand, he subdues himself completely to the working of the Divine-will.

Worldly love, which a worldly-minded person has for sense-pleasures, for wealth, and for name and fame, etc., when directed with greater and pure zeal towards God and God-realization is called Bhakti-Yoga. To concentrate the mind on God through intense love is called Bhakti-Yoga. When the mind constantly lives in the thought of God and when even a little break of such a thought looks like an aeon, then it is called Bhakti-Yoga. When honey or caster oil is poured from one pot to another it forms a thread like continuity; in the same way when a devotee's mind constantly lives in Divine contemplation without any break, it is Bhakti-Yoga. Bhakti-Yoga is the unceasing search for God through pure love. The anxiety, the pangs of separation, the intense desire and effort to unite with God through love is called Bhakti-Yoga. Unshaken love for God and not for anything else is called Bhakti-Yoga. Bhakti is a supremely blissful experience. It is an unadulterated and unalloyed state of supreme felicity. The highest worldly sense-pleasures, even the highest celestial pleasures pale into insignificance before Divine bliss or the bliss of God-realization. Bhakti is not loss of individuality as in Nirvikalpa Samadhi, but it is only supreme transcendence of the limitations of the individuality and regaining of the true status of the Spirit. Bhakti means the mind settling down naturally upon the Highest Truth and the uninterrupted thought flowing towards It constantly without break. When all the activities of the senses (Indriyas) are turned as a worship unto the Lord, then it is Bhakti. Bhakti is an incessant flow of love to the Lord with the knowledge and understanding that the Lord is possessed of unequalled, unsurpassed infinite auspicious qualities, and it excludes one's love to one's own Self and is not hindered even by the deepest sorrows, troubles and tribulations. The constant enjoyment of God Vision unobstructed by any other desire is called Bhakti.

In supreme Bhakti all the powers of the mind, all the workings of the mind are unified and integrated and, as such, intellect, mind, will, ego, etc., work in harmony. Then, what remains is love and love alone. Love divested of desire and carnality is called Bhakti. When Bhakti develops it is known as Bhava. When Bhava develops it becomes Maha Bhava (Divine ecstasy. It shakes the body and the mind to their very foundation. This state is just like that of a huge elephant entering a small hut. Bhakti matured becomes Bhava, and Bhava develops into Maha Bhava, Maha Bhava develops into Prem and Prem to God-realization.) When Maha Bhava matures, it becomes Prem. When a man gets Prem, God-realization is easy and near at hand.

Love is of different grades, i. e., Ekangi-love. Sadharani-love, Samanjasa-love and Samartha-love.

Ekangi-Love :- Ekangi-love is one-sided love. The miser loves his money and the duck loves water but money or water does not love the man or the duck respectively. Likewise, the devotee loves the Lord with a certain selfish motive behind, and there is no response to his love yet. The love is one-sided and based on selfishness.

Sadharani-Love :- Sadharani-love is ordinary love. Here the devotee seeks his or her own happiness. He or she does not care for the happiness of the Beloved.

Samanjasa-Love :- Samanjasa-love is a compromise. Both the lovers seek the happiness of each other. It is a step higher. The devotee cares for the comforts of his Beloved and there is a response also from the Lord for the prayers and desires of the devotee. At the same time the devotee expects his or her own comforts also.

Samartha-Love :- In Samartha-love, the lover always seeks the highest good of the Beloved without the least sort of expectation in return. A devotee of Samartha-love will love, regard, worship and serve the Lord whole-heartedly without heeding for his or her own comforts.

Bhakti is of two kinds, viz., Vaidhi (lower) and Raga (higher). Of these, Vaidhi-Bhakti is only the initial stage in which one proceeds with external worship, but Raga-Bhakti is Prem, the highest development of Bhakti. Vaidhi-Bhakti is according to the prescribed rules and regulations of the Scriptures. One proceeds slowly and steadily along this path. In this kind of Bhakti first comes the selection of the Istha Devata (the god or goddess one loves, likes and adores the most is called Istha Devata and its name becomes the Istha Mantra). God is one only. It is without name and form. But at the same time It manifests Itself in multifarious names and forms to suit the proclivity of a devotee. A Jnani meditates upon the unmanifested state of God and whereas a devotee likes to worship God through a certain name and form. The latter finds it easy to concentrate his mind on a certain Divine name and form and to meditate upon it. Different devotees like different forms of God. Some like the form of all renouncing Shiva and meditate upon it. Some like the form of Kali, the Mother of the Universe. Some others worship Durga, Saraswati, Lakshmi, etc., and offer their prayers and worship them. Some others worship Rama, Krishna, Buddha, etc., and worship and meditate upon these forms. Some others worship God as the Sun, Fire or as the All-pervading Spirit. With all these differences in name and form, the Thing is essentially one. The same Thing is being worshipped by different people, in different forms according to their tastes and tendencies. A devotee may take up any Divine name and he or she may worship any Divine form, the essential thing required is true love, faith and sincerity.

A chaste and an ideal daughter-in-law of a big family attends to the comforts of her parents-in-law, sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, etc. She loves and regards one and all. She serves them all whole-heartedly. But at the same time her love, her regard and her attachment to her husband is special and more intense than to any one else. She has no secrets to hide, no reservations to make, and nothing to keep back from her most beloved husband. Her weal and her woe, her pain and her pleasure, in short, everything she surrenders unto her husband. Likewise is the attitude of a true devotee. A real devotee of God and one who has made steady progress spiritually will find no distinction between the different religions. He will worship Rama, Krishna, Durga and Kali, etc., in Hindu temples ; he will worship Jesus and Madonna in the Christian churches ; he will worship Buddha in the Buddhist temples ; he will worship Mahavira in the Jaina temples ; he will worship Fire in the Fire alter of the Parsees and he will worship God in the Mosque of the Muslims ; but at the same time his love, his regard and his devotion to his chosen ideal and religion will be special. A genuine devotee will think of his chosen Deity (Istha Devata) constantly, he will always pray to his Deity, he will revere, regard and worship his Istha Devata whole-heartedly. He will pray to his chosen ideal with a travail heart for purity, peace of mind, pure love unto His Hallowed Lotus Feet, for character and for right guidance. In weal and in woe, in pain and in pleasure, in troubles and in tribulations, in happiness and in misery, etc., he will always keep his Lord before him. He will resign completely unto the Divine-will and will see the sweet Divine-will in and through everything. He will not get worried over pain and failure. He will not get elated by success and happiness. He will offer every bit of a thing unto the Lord. By self-surrender he will eradicate the ego idea.

In Bhakti-Yoga, one takes the aid of a Guru (Spiritual Teacher or Guide). The Guru is one who has realized God or one who has attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi (Transcendental state). The Guru is a mediator between God and the aspirant. Is Guru absolutely necessary to attain God-realization? No. There are some great Souls, who are born perfect or who are very highly developed spiritually from their very birth. These people come into the world with Sattva-Guna predominating. For such people there is no need of a Guru. These people, by the mere dint of their purity and inner development as a result of their past lives merits, find out their path, Istha Devata and reach the Ultimate Goal. The number of such great Souls is, no doubt, few. Such great people apart, ordinary men and women require the aid of a Guru in their spiritual career. The spiritual path is very long, very tedious and very weary. Often one has to walk alone through an unknown and forlorn tract. A Sadhaka (aspirant) often feels tired and restless, and loses hope. Many give up work and effort for lack of encouragement and response. There are many dangers and pitfalls on the spiritual path. It is very difficult for an ordinary aspirant to overcome these obstacles. For such aspirants a Guru's aid is absolutely necessary. The work of the Guru is to guide the disciple safely along the right path to God-realization. The Guru is responsible for the mental and spiritual growth of the disciple. He takes charge of the disciple and guides him safely along the proper path. Whenever the latter feels any doubt and finds any difficulty in the spiritual path the ever watchful Guru clears the doubt, removes the difficulty and guides him aright. It is the Guru who selects the Istha Devata and the Istha Mantra for his disciple according to the latter's spiritual growth, ability and taste. Before accepting an aspirant the teacher tests the man and when he finds him fit he accepts him as his disciple. The disciple also, in turn, tests the ability of the person whom he is going to adopt as his Guru. This connection of the Guru and his disciple is not suddenly formed. If done, it will be a blunder. Both must move and watch closely for some time, it may be some days or months, and when both get satisfied, then only the connection should be formed. When once the connection is formed there should be no going back. The disciple must love, regard and carry out the behests of the Guru implicitly. The Guru must be regarded by the disciple as the very embodiment of God. And the Guru, in turn, must treat the disciple with all love and kindness like his own son.

The Guru selects the god or goddess that the disciple likes, loves and adores the most. The same name of that very god or goddess becomes the Istha Mantra. The Guru imparts the Mantra to the diciple. Any name and every name does not become a Mantra. Every Mantra has got a formula. When a Mantra is well-directed, it saves a person from bondage and misery, and when it is ill-directed it ruins a man completely. The power of the Mantra is the power of the Deity. There is no difference between God and His Name. Brahman and Its Shakti are motionless and soundless. The first emanating stage in the production of a Mantra is Nada. When Nada develops it is called Bindu. From Bindu proceeds Bija. The Bija is the natural name of a god or goddess or the first causal stress of the name of a god or goddess heard by the Yogic-mind (purified and subtle mind). A manifested Mantra consists of letters. Thus a Mantra is derived from the Nada which is the creative energy (Kriya Shakti) of Brahman Shakti, the Supreme Nada. Nada is the first-produced movement in the ideating Cosmic Consciousness leading up to the Shabdabrahman (Brahman as sound), from which all ideas, languages or sounds which express our thoughts as words and their objects conceived accordingly are derived. The mind has no shape, no colour and no form of its own. It takes the shape and form of a thing it constantly thinks of and lives in. By constantly thinking of God, His Might and Glories and by constantly taking His Name (Mantra) the mind becomes pure and one-pointed. One gathers infinite strength by constantly_living in that one Supreme idea. By constantly thinking of god or goddess and the Mantra, the mind takes the form of the Deity and one gains the qualities of the Deity. When a Mantra Jap (repetition of Mantra) is practised regularly, it purifies the body, Nadis (nerves) and the mind and this purification facilitates God-realization.

The Mantras of different gods and goddesses can be had from the Scriptures. That being the case what is the use of taking the same Mantras from a teacher (Guru) ? No doubt the Mantras of different gods and goddesses can be got from the religious text-books. But a mere repetition of these Mantras without properly understanding their spirit and without knowing their proper use may produce contrary results. Besides, a true Guru while giving the Mantra Diksha (Initiation) imparts a certan spiritual force to the disciple. As a matter of fact, the Guru gives a new birth,a new body (spiritual body) to the disciple. This imparting of spirituality raises the disciple to a higher plane after Initiation. After Mantra Diksha, the Guru has to take the sins of the disciple. So, if a Guru is not a man of God-realization, the sins of the disciple or disciples drag him down and often such a Guru degenerates and succumbs to humiliation and moral depravity. On the other hand, a true Guru (a man of highest God-realization), by his supernormal powers, has the gift of easily assimilating the sins of disciples and such a Guru alone is safe and fit to give Mantra Diksha and make disciples. The Mantra

Diksha by these great spiritual personalities bears immediate fruit, and thereby helping and uplifting the disciples to a great extent.

As has been said already, the Ultimate Truth is one and the same. It is All-pervading and Infinite. Infinity has no form and no colour; and It has no beginning and no end. This Unlimited Thing is impossible to be conceived by the limited human mind. One can have a glimpse of Infinity in Samadhi. A man who has attained Nirvana alone can understand and grasp the idea of Infinity and God without name and form. Apart from this state (state of Nirvana) name and subtle form always go hand in hand. They are quite inseparable. Where there is name, there will be its subtle form also. The ordinary mind cannot conceive or get the meaning of a name without its subtle form in the brain-centre. The mind projects a subtle form in the brain-centre according to the name suggestion and then only the meaning to the name heard is reflected in the mind. As a novice has not attained the purity and the subtleness of the mind, he has to take the aid of external objects such as images, photos, Mantras and the Yantras (Diagrams) pertaining to his Istha Devata under the instructions of the Guru.

A Bhakta (devotee) does not consider the image, photo or the Yantra of his Istha Devata as a mere stone, or a paper painting. He actually considers and treats the image, photo or Yantra as a true symbol of his Istha Devata. He sees the actual Divine presence in it and regards, revers and worships it actually as his Istha Devata. First, a devotee will set apart a neat and well-ventilated room to serve the purpose of a shrine. He will keep the room neat and tidy, free from dust, dirt, and flies. He will keep the room sacred. He will install his Istha Devata (it may be a photo, an image or a Yantra of the Istha Devata) in that room. He will always enter this room after a bath and with neat clothes on. He will burn incense both in the morning and in the evening. He will take his seat in front of his Istha Devata facing North.

A devotee worships his Istha Devata according to the following sixteen rules prescribed for his purification and spiritual development and these are called Upachara in worship. The devotee invites his Istha Devata and offers Him a seat and makes Him sit. This is called Asana. In the second process he welcomes the Deity and it is called Svagata. In the third process he offers water for washing the feet of the Deity. Then in the fourth and the fifth processes he offers some thing to the Deity (light refreshment) in a vessel. And that offering may be general (Samanya) or it may be special (Vishesha). This process is called Arghya. The sixth process is Achamana, i. e., water offered twice for sipping and cleaning the lips. The seventh process is Madhuparka, i. e., offering of honey, ghee, milk and curd mixed together. Then he offers water for bathing. This eighth process is called Snana. In the ninth process he offers cloth for garment. In the tenth process he offers jewels to the Deity. This is called Abharana. In the eleventh process he offers Sandal paste. It is called Gandha. The twelfth process is the offering of flowers, garlands, etc., to the Deity. In the thirteenth process he offers burning incense. In the fourteenth process he waves light as a mark of regard to the Deity. Then he offers Naivedya, i.e., cooked food, sweets, fruits, etc., to the Deity. This is the fifteenth process. After offering food, water to wash hands, etc., the devotee prostrates at the feet of the Deity and then to retire the Deity for rest. This process is known as Vandana or Namaskriya. The object of this worship is to feel the living presence of the Istha Devata in the photo, image or in the Yantra. Such imaginations undoubtedly help a devotee much in the initial stage. And when a man has made a headway spiritually he needs no photo, image or Yantra. These imaginations then become realities. One can actually feel the Divine presence in advanced spiritual stages.

The lowest kind of spiritual Sadhana (practice) is to worship the Deity by the above prescribed methods and to go from place to place on pilgrimage. Higher than this is to sit in one place and do Mantra Jap (repetition of Istha Mantra). Those whose mind is unsteady and those who cannot devote their full time for doing Mantra Jap take to worship and Tirthayatra (pilgrimage). Higher than Mantra Jap is Dhyana (Meditation). The highest kind of spiritual Sadhana is to attain Samadhi, and to go into Samadhi at will and to come down to normal plane at will. Generally, a Sadhaka performs Mantra Jap after worshipping his Istha Devata. He may repeat the holy name by telling beads some thousands of times according to his ability and his Guru's instructions. The uttering of a Mantra is of three kinds, viz., Vachika (loud), Upamshu (inside the mouth) and Manasa (in the mind only). To make it clearer, in the Vachika way of uttering the Mantra, the uttering is loud and audible and another person sitting close by can hear it. A novice finds it easy to check his wandering mind by uttering the

Mantra, as he finds no inclination for and is unable to concentrate his mind on silent repetition of the Hallowed Name. In the second process, the Mantra uttered is not audible and a person sitting close by cannot hear it though he can see the lips moving. In the third process none can understand or have any clue to a devotee's doing Manasa Jap. Such a devotee may be sitting quiet like an idler or he may be walking along a street, but his mind will be busy in thinking of his Istha Devata and the Istha Mantra.

The Vachika way of doing a Jap is called Tamasika, the Upamshu way is called Rajasika and the Manasa way, Sattvika. The first two processes are beset with dangers. When a man does Mantra Jap in a Vachika or Upamshu way, his friends and kith and kin praise him and often they make of him a great devotee, whereas the man is only a spiritual tiro, just on the starting line. But on hearing the praises of others he is apt to get elated, his egoism automatically and unconsciously grows and his spiritual growth gets stranded and he is very likely to make a vain show of his spirituality to the public. There are many such frauds in this world. In the Manasa way of doing a Mantra Jap, however, one does it in secret. Such being the case, the wife may not know the husband's practices or the husband may not know what the wife does in the spiritual world. Here, absolute secret is observed and the progress is speedy and one escapes the notice of others. Only spiritually developed people can do the Manasa Jap and they find great pleasure in uttering the Jap in the mind alone without making a display of the same to the public. The fruit of such kind of Jap is the highest.

The aim of a Mantra is to make the mind steady and thereby to attain Freedom. As has been said already, the mind has no colour and no shape of its own. It takes the colour and form of the thing one thinks of and lives in constantly. The mind on the point of gaining purity can be compared to a piece of well-washed linen or a prism. Whatever colour is given to the linen piece it absorbs deeply. And whatever colour (it may be red, white, yellow or orange coloured flowers) is placed near a prism, it automatically appears of that colour. Likewise, if a person lives constantly in the company of bad and vulgar people he becomes characterless. On the contrary. if one lives, moves and has his being in the association of good people and good books, etc., the mind is coloured and impressed with good and noble thoughts and such a person becomes a man of sterling character. Similarly, by constantly thinking of the Istha Devata and of the Istha Mantra, one gains the purity and power of the Istha Devata. An ordinary mind is restless. The very nature of an impure mind is to like and to dislike and to go in pursuit of sense-pleasures. It cannot live on one point steadily. Innumerable wandering thoughts drag his mind hither and thither. As the ripples and the waves make the sea restless, so do the multifarious thoughts make the mind restless. What we want is to get rid of these numerous thoughts and instead to make the mind live in one thought and one object. As a matter of fact the ordinary mind cannot live without an object to think of. Wherever there is thought there will be its form also. So in order to get rid of the multifarious desires, thoughts and forms, one should make one desire, one thought, and one form, the object of mind's constant thinking. When one succeeds in this effort and when the mind lives in one desire, in one thought and one form, to the exclusion of numerous desires, numerous thoughts and numerous forms, it becomes easier to take the mind beyond that one desire, thought and form.

Apart from worshipping the Istha Devata and doing the Istha Mantra Jap, a Bhakta takes the help of the company of the Saints and advanced Sadhakas. Moving in the company of and serving the great Saints, one's own Guru and other spiritually advanced people, one gets purified and such acts help one much in making headway spiritually. Holy association and talk, unconsciously and automatically raise a man to higher levels. A devotee takes part in singing the glory of the Lord. He attends classes where devotional books are read and their meaning expounded by erudite persons. In spare time a Bhakta reads the biographies of great Saints, the Gita, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, etc. Such readings help him much. Reading the biographies of Saints and holy men makes one put forth hard and ardent struggle for God-realization. One becomes familiar with the ways and means adopted by them for spiritual advancement and the hard and tough struggle they underwent along the path of God-realization.

The attitude with which and the spirit in which one's Istha Devata is worshipped, differs with different Sadhakas according to their spiritual growth. It is not at all necessary that a Sadhaka must pass through the different Bhavas in order to realize God. Any man or woman by developing any one of the Bhavas enumerated man of sterling character. Similarly, by constantly thinking of the Istha Devata and of the Istha Mantra, one gains the purity and power of the Istha Devata. An ordinary mind is restless. The very nature of an impure mind is to like and to dislike and to go in pursuit of sense-pleasures. It cannot live on one point steadily. Innumerable wandering thoughts drag his mind hither and thither. As the ripples and the waves make the sea restless, so do the multifarious thoughts make the mind restless. What we want is to get rid of these numerous thoughts and instead to make the mind live in one thought and one object. As a matter of fact the ordinary mind cannot live without an object to think of. Wherever there is thought there will be its form also. So in order to get rid of the multifarious desires, thoughts and forms, one should make one desire, one thought, and one form, the object of mind's constant thinking. When one succeeds in this effort and when the mind lives in one desire, in one thought and one form, to the exclusion of numerous desires, numerous thoughts and numerous forms, it becomes easier to take the mind beyond that one desire, thought and form.

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(1) Santa Bhava (Philosophical attitude):- Santa Bhava is the starting point of devotion. The person has not made any progress spiritually, but he has great hankering after God-realization. He has read the Scriptures. He has approached the Guru. He has taken Mantra Diksha and the necessary instructions to work on. He has definitely come to know through his Guru and through the Scriptures that there exists a Thing called God, and that He is more real than anything else in this world. Man suffers because he has forgotten God. Happiness here and hereafter lies in realizing God. And that God is the Almighty Ruler of the Universe. A novice thinks that though God is All-pervading and everywhere present, His special abode is heaven. A man of Santa Bhava thinks of God as a

Mighty Emperor. He draws a line of demarcation between Him and himself. He thinks himself to be a puny creature entirely depending upon the mercy of God. He worships God out of fear, awe and reverence. He is not intimate with God. His love for God is immature and he discriminates and tries to understand God.

(2) Dasya Bhava (Servant's attitude) :- Some people like to think of God as their Master and put themselves in the position of a servant. Here, in this Bhava, the Sadhaka becomes more intimate with God. He considers himself as a faithful servant of the Lord. He considers God as his Master and he puts himself in the attitude of an obedient, and devoted servant. He always keeps his Lord in view and every act of his mind and senses is a sort of obeisance unto Him. He eats for God, drinks for God, sleeps for God. Nay ! even his very heart-beats are for his most Beloved Lord. As a faithful servant takes care of his master's family, children, house, wealth, etc., without reserve, in like manner does a devotee live in the world and attend to multifarious duties and actions but in his heart of hearts he takes all these as God's work. He attends to every work without neglect and without attachment and is not troubled about the consequences of those acts. For, he knows fully well that the work done has been only for the sake of his Beloved. As such, nothing can taint him and he is absolved of all sins.

In the Ramayana we get a typical Dasya Bhava Bhakti in the person of Sri Hanumanji. Sri Hanumanji served Sri Ramachandra wholeheartedly with a Dasya Bhava. He had infinite faith in Sri Ramachandra and in his words. In the service of Sri Rama, Hanumanji forgot his own body, bodily comforts and even the idea of death. With that great faith he did marvellous deeds. He even jumped from India to Lanka and back from Lanka to India, whereas Sri Rama himself had to make a bridge from India to Lanka to cross the sea. Verily, intense faith through any one of the Bhavas can do miracles in this world.

(3) Sakhya Bhava (Friend's attitude) :- The third attitude which a devotee may assume in worshipping God is Sakhya Bhava, i. e., the attitude of a friend. In this Bhava a man becomes even more intimate with God. He gives up all fears and discards all differences. He has nothing to get and nothing to beg or request for from God. He only loves God as his bosom friend and desires ardently His most Beloved company. He does not expect anything of God except His company. Here, in this Bhava, the devotee thinks of God as his playmate and he does not like to part from Him even for a second. He always thinks of God and his whole mind lives absorbed in the idea of God. We can see the emblematic representation of this Bhava in Arjuna and Sri Krishna or with the cow-boys of Vrindavan and Sri Krishna. Arjuna treated Sri Krishna as his most beloved friend. The cow-boys of Vrindavan who were the playmates of Sri Krishna, treated the latter as one of them. They played and chatted with him freely and without reserve.

(4) Vatsalya Bhava (Parental attitude) :- The fourth attitude a devotee may assume in worshipping God is the Vatsalya Bhava. In this Bhava a devotee thinks of God as his or her Beloved Darling. Devaki the mother of Sri Krishna, and the wife of Nanda, the foster mother of Sri Krishna treated him as their pet child. They did not expect anything from Sri Krishna. They even chastised him whenever he went wrong. They served him and attended to his needs and requirements taking him as their child. Likewise, a devotee of Vatsalya Bhava will not expect anything from the Lord. He will put the Lord in the position of a child and will attend on Him with infinite care and affection, and with a deep and loving sympathy for all the requirements of the Divine Child. A loving mother attends on her baby with the sole object of making her infant happy. She does not expect anything in return for the services rendered to her baby. On the other hand, she sacrifices everything for the sake of her child. In like manner, does a devotee of Vatsalya Bhava serve and make the Divine Child comfortable and happy. He sacrifices his own comforts, nay, even his life, if necessary, to please the Divine Child.

(5) Madura Bhava (The attitude of a sweet-heart):- Madura Bhava is to think of God as one's Beloved Husband. A pure and chaste wife loves her husband whole-heartedly. She has no reserve whatsoever. She does not care for her body and comforts. Her whole aim, her every effort is concentrated on serving her lord and in making him comfortable and happy. Similarly, a Sadhaka of Madura Bhava, though a male, thinks himself as a female and considers the Lord as the Husband. He thinks that there is only one male person in this universe and that is God. He thinks and denys the existence of any other male in this universe and takes God to be his most Beloved Husband. Many male Sadhakas under this Bhava adorn themselves with ornaments like women and they put on Sarees, etc. A person under this Bhava comes to a very close connection with God. Thinking and taking God as the most Beloved Husband, the Sadhaka revers Him, and serves Him with all his heart and with all his soul without the least ting of any expectation in return. Here, the one aim of the devotee is to serve and please the Lord, the Divine Husband. The devotee's whole mind is always concentrated on Him. To many modern people this Bhava may look very strange. Many unripe minds may misconceive this Bhava and take this attitude of a devotee to be that of a sexual connection. Many discard and laugh at this Bhava without knowing the inner secret and the force of this Bhava. In the first place every one is not fit to have this Bhava. If a novice or an unripe mind adopts this Bhava it may end in debauchery. Such men cannot make any progress spiritually. Only spiritually high-developed people can proceed with this Bhava safely and reach the Ultimate Goal. A Sadhaka who takes up this Bhava must firstly be pure, secondly, he must be a perfect Brahmachari, thirdly, he must be free from the idea of carnality and sexual instincts, fourthly, he must possess perfect control over the senses and the mind. Such a man alone can proceed along with this Bhava safely. Under this Bhava one is apt to forget one's own body. When one attains this state of mind and practises Madura Bhava, one gets Prema Bhakti. With the attainment of Prema Bhakti lust or carnality, or attachment to one's own body and senses drops away and God-realization becomes easy and near. With the development of this highest kind of Bhakti or Bhava one communes with God, and lives in the idea of God at all times. The very name of God brings horripilation and tears in a person and he takes intense pleasure in talking and in hearing the name of God. Such a person becomes almost dead to the world and worldly objects. As a typical example of this Bhakti or Madura Bhava we have Sri Radha and the Gopis of Vrindavan. In their mad love for Sri Krishna, Sri Radha and the Gopis forgot their kith and kin, forgot their husbands and children and even forgot their own bodies. They were mad after Krishna. Without seeing Krishna, without thinking of Krishna, they found it impossible to live in this world.

Apart from these five kinds of Bhavas some think of God as the Father of the Universe.

Others think of Him and worship Him as the Almighty Mother of the Universe. A Tantra Sadhaka of Vira Bhava worships the Mother of the Universe as his Wife. Some others think of God and worship Him as the Creator, Sustainer, and Destroyer of the Universe. So one can approach Truth and realize Truth with different attitudes and Bhavas. But what is most essential is firm faith and sincerity.

A man or woman of emotional temperaments practises nine kinds of devotion, viz., (1) Listening to the praises of God. (2) To praise God. (3) Always to think of Him. (4) Serving Him at His Feet. (5) Always to worship Him. (6) To bow down before Him. (7) To act as His slave and devotee. (8) To love Him whole-heartedly. (9) To prostrate before Him and dedicate one's self entirely to Him.

Love or Bhakti is a natural thing in any man or woman or, for the matter of that, in any living being. Out of the four Yogas (Karma, Bhakti, Jnana and Raja) Bhakti-Yoga is the easiest and the safest. A Sannyasi or a householder, a man or a woman, and even children and the illiterate can practice Bhakti-Yoga safely without the least danger. In Bhakti-Yoga the dangers and pitfalls are few. This path is adoptable by one and all.

The Scriptures debar women and the Shudras from studying the Vedas. But some of the Veda Mantras were revealed by women and by Shudra Saints. We should not take the Scriptures literally but we have to understand the spirit. Not only are the vast majority of women and the Shudras unfit to read and understand the Vedas and their subtle truths, but the majority of men generally are also unfit to read the Vedas. The reading of the Vedas by ignorant people is useless. It produces contrary results. The Veda Vakyas (sayings) are not properly understood by the ordinary man or woman. For such people the Veda Vakyas are just like pearls thrown before swine. The swine cannot make use of pearls, they only trample on them and destroy them. And that is why the Scriptures forbid an ordinary man or woman from reading the Vedas. For such people, the path of Bhakti is enunciated which is open to all irrespective of caste, creed, colour, age and sex.

Complete self-surrender is the most important thing in Bhakti-Yoga. A Bhakta (devotee) will offer everything at the Hallowed Lotus Feet of the Lord. He will consider his body, mind, health, wealth, etc., at the disposal of God. He will entirely depend upon the mercy of God. He has no responsibility, no selection and no planning whatsoever. He has no anxiety, no worry and no fear. He will not exercise his free will. He will keep himself and act at the will of God. He will act like a dry leaf fallen on the ground. The dry leaf has no will of its own. When a breeze blows from the North, the dry leaf is carried away to the South. And when an Eastern breeze blows it is carried away to the West. Likewise, a true devotee, a man who has completely resigned to and taken shelter at His Feet will act. A true devotee will take and face weal or woe without complaint. He will see the Divine Hand in and through everything. He will perceive the Divine-will in success as well as failure, in happiness as well as misery.

In Srimad Bhagavad Gita Sri Krishna says to Arjuna thus: "O Arjuna, verily, this divine illusion of Mine, constituted of the Gunas (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas), is difficult to cross; those who devote themselves to Me alone, get across this illusion. Four kinds of virtuous men worship Me, i.e., the distressed, the seekers after knowledge, the seekers after enjoyment and the wise. Of them, the wise man, ever steadfast with devotion to Me, excels; for supremely dear am I to the wise, and they are dear to Me.

Whatever form a devotee seeks to worship with Shraddha - that Shraddha of his do I make unwavering. Endued with that Shraddha, he engages in the worship of that, and from it, gains his desires, – these being verily dispensed by Me alone. By the delusion of the pairs of opposites arising from desire and aversion, O descendant of Bharata, all beings fall into delusion at birth. But those men of virtuous deeds, whose sins have come to an end, they, freed from the delusion of the pairs of opposites, worship Me with firm resolve. I am easily attainable by that ever steadfast Yogin who remembers Me constantly and daily, with a singleness of mind. Reaching the highest perfection, and having attained Me, the great Souled ones are no more subject to re-birth-the home of pain and ephemeral. And that Supreme Purusha is attainable, O son of Pritha, by whole-souled devotion to Him alone, in Whom all beings dwell and by Whom all this is pervaded. I am the origin of all, from Me everything evolves;- thus thinking the wise worship Me with loving consciousness. With their minds wholy in Me, with their senses absorbed in Me, mutually enlightening, and always speaking of Me, they are satisfied and delighted. To them, ever steadfast and serving Me with affection, I give that Buddhi Yoga by which they come unto Me. Out of mere compassion for them, I, abiding in their hearts, destroy the darkness in them born of ignorance, by the luminous lamp of knowledge. Fix thy mind on Me only, place thy intellect in Me ; thou shalt no doubt live in Me hereafter. He who hates no creature, and is friendly and compassionate towards all, who is free from the feelings of "I" and "Mine", even-minded in pain and pleasure, and forbearing, ever-content and steady in meditation, self-controlled, possessed of firm conviction, with mind and intellect fixed on Me,—he who is thus devoted to Me, is dear to Me. He by whom the world is not agitated and who cannot be agitated by the world, freed from joy, envy, fear and anxiety, he is dear to Me. He who is free from dependence, who is pure, prompt, unconcerned, untroubled, renouncing every undertaking, he who is thus devoted to Me, is dear to Me. He who neither rejoices, nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires, renouncing good and evil, – he who is full of devotion, is dear to Me. The tranquil-minded Brahman become. They neither grieve nor desire, the same to all beings, such people alone attain to supreme devotion unto Me. By true devotion they know Me in reality, what and who

I am; then having known Me in reality, taking refuge in Me,—by My grace they attain to the eternal, immutable state."

VI

JNANA-YOGA

Jnana means knowledge, and that knowledge is of two kinds, viz., lower and higher. Knowledge concerning this world and of ephemeral things is called lower knowledge. The knowledge and the wisdom concerning the Final Truth or the Ultimate Thing is the higher kind of knowledge (Vijnana). There are three terms i. e., Jnana, Jnani and Vijnani. To understand them let us take an example – A man has not seen milk, but he has read and heard that milk is white, it is liquid, it is nutritious and easily digested, etc. This kind of knowledge is called Jnana. A man reads Scriptures, hears from a Guru regarding the Ultimate Truth. But he has no real knowledge whatsoever regarding God. This is Jnana. In the second stage, the man sees milk, its white colour and its liquid form and tastes it a little. This state is known as Jnani. A Jnani is one who has begun a sincere search for the Ultimate Truth, he has experienced a little of that Infinite Bliss but still he has not merged in Samadhi, nor has he eliminated and freed himself from delusion. In the third stage the man sees milk, touches milk and drinks milk to his heart's content whenever he likes. This state is Vijnana. A Vijnani is one who has realized the Ultimate Truth and who is free from attachment and bondage. Jnana-Yoga means the path of knowledge. The path adopted to gain Wisdom is Jnana-Yoga. The method of discrimination by which one attains liberation from birth, growth, disease, decay and death is called Jnana-Yoga. To concentrate the mind through discrimination between the Real and the unreal is called Jnana-Yoga. This is also called Neti Marga (Not this, Not this).

God is Infinite, Eternal, Immutable, Illimitable, Ever Changeless, Indestructible, All-pervading, Ever-free and One without a second. It has no birth, no growth, no disease, no decay, no death, no sex, no caste, no creed and no colour. It is mindless. It has no Gunas and It is beyond the idea of time, space and causation. Fire cannot burn It. Wind cannot dry It. The sun cannot scorch It. The sword cannot cut It. It is the Light of lights, the Life of lives, the Lord of lords, the God of gods, the Power of powers, the Force of forces, and the Wisdom of wisdoms. The whole universe exists in God. It is due to God that the sun shines, the stars shine, the moon shines, fire burns, wind dries, water wets and clouds rain, etc. God is the inner-most Self of every being. The All-pervading Spirit without any limits is called God. And the same Spirit dwelling in every creature is called Atman or Jivatman. God is the Subject of all subjects. In one sense God can never be known. It beings the very Subject of all subjects how to know It? To know means to objectify a thing, and the Subject of all subjects can never become an object. In another sense God is more than known to you. For, It is your very Self. What proof do you want for your very existence?

The world is nothing but a projection of one's own mind. As one thinks, so one becomes. God pervades every-thing. Not a single thing but is pervaded and permeated by God. The universe consists of names and forms. Take away names and forms from the universe; what remains is God and God alone. Take a number of things made of gold, things such as bracelet, chain, necklace, bangle, ring, cup, saucer, spoon, etc. If you melt and destory the different forms of these articles, what remains is gold and gold alone. Likewise, remove the different names and forms from this world, what remains is God and God alone. An ignorant man sees the names and forms and takes them to be real and forgets God who is the cause of all these names and forms. One sees the ripples and the waves of the ocean and takes them as separate from the ocean. He forgets that the ripples and the waves have no separate existence apart from the water of the ocean. The real thing is the ocean and if there is no ocean, there will be no ripples and no waves.

An ordinary man experiences three states everyday, i. e., waking, dreaming and sleeping. In the waking-state this world of name and form becomes a real thing to him. He weeps and laughs with every pain and pleasure and he experiences a variety of things through the aid of his gross and subtle senses and mind. But the same man, when in a dream, forgets totally the waking-state world and his connection with his wife, children, friends, and relatives. Then, his connection in the dream - world is with quite different persons. As this world appears real to a man in the waking-state, so does the dream-world become real to the dreamer. A man in a dream does never suspect the unreality of the dream-world and its objects. So long as a man is dreaming, he takes the dream-world to be a real thing. He weeps and laughs when in pain and pleasure. But when the same man enters into deep sleep, the waking-state world as well as the dream-state world disappear. Then the person goes beyond the idea of time, space and causation. In deep sleep the mind merges in the Atman (Self). But as ignorance is not destroyed, the merging of the mind in the Self is not complete and owing to this ignorance a man coming back to normal consciousness does not understand and realise the merging of the mind with the Self. But there is the fourth state, viz., Turiya or transcendental state which is enjoyed by the most fortunate few people. A man once entering Nirvikalpa Samadhi purges off all sins, all delusions and what remains to him is God and God alone. In this state, the waking-state world, the dream-world and the deep dreamless-sleep-state disappear. In Samadhi a person goes beyond the idea of time, space and causation and beyond the three Gunas, viz., Tamas, Rajas and Sattva. In this state the idea of subject, object and knowledge merges completely. A person once entering Samadhi loses the idea of bondage or of liberation and Wisdom. In that state there is no room for a second person. Then the Thing in Itself or the Ocean of Consciousness by Itself alone lives.

Such being the case, bondage to whom? Liberation to whom? The question of either bondage or of liberation does not arise in the person who is in Samadhi.

The world of names and forms exists in time, space and causation. Time, space and causation in turn exist in the mind. The whole world exists because of the mind. Mind has no separate existence apart from the Self. The mind is only an instrument of the Self. The mind gets its light and life from the Self. The mind experiences and knows the world through the five subtle and five gross senses. It is the mind that works all the senses. The senses by themselves cannot work without the mind. In the waking-state the senses constantly drag the mind to multifarious objects. These actions of the senses, dissipate the powers of the mind and one loses the power of concentration and the mind fails to catch the reflection of the Self. If you stand on the bank of a lake and look at the water-surface, you can see your reflection as well as that of the surrounding objects if the water is not ruffled by ripples and waves. On the contrary, if the water is shaky, you fail to see your reflection on the water-surface. Likewise, when the mind gets ruffled owing to the numerous thought-waves of different sense-objects one fails totally to perceive the Self. When the mind becomes calm and quiet, i. e., in Samadhi, one easily perceives the Self.

A wasp enters a big hall through a door passage. The door is still open but the wasp forgets the door-way and seeing the white wall takes it to be an exit, rushes towards it and strike its head against the wall. The wasp gets stunned and confused. Seeing light coming through the window it then rushes towards the pane and strikes its head against it and gets injured and more bewildered. Then, again it flies towards another window seeing light coming through the panes and gets injured and confused once again. Though the original passage through which it entered the room is still wide open, the wasp forgets that passage and makes vain attempts through worng ways hoping against hope. The wasp perishes inside the room without finding an outlet to get out. Why is it that the wasp forgets the door-way through which it entered the hall, though the door-way is still wide open? What is the cause of this delusion? Why does the wasp get bewildered? There is no answer to this "why". The delusion is of the mind due to the actions of the Gunas born of Maya Shakti. The Self behind every person is free and eternal but the mind coming in contact with the multifarious objects of the senses of this world gets bewildered like the wasp in the hall. Man forgets his own True Nature. He identifies himself with the perishing body, senses, mind and intellect. He forgets the passage through which he enters this world. Instead of taking the real path to Freedom, he takes the perverted course that leads to bondage. Though he wants Freedom, he thinks that he will get the same from the worldly things and by enjoying the sense-objects. The more he enjoys these evanescent objects, the more he receives blows and gets confused. Thus, like a wasp in the room, an ordinary person struggles and gives up his life in vain attempts, hoping against hope.

A gentleman walking in a garden in moonlight sees a rope lying in a zig-zag way. He takes it to be a snake and calls for his servants to go over to the place with sticks and a lantern to kill the snake. But when the servants go to the place with light and sticks, the gentleman comes to know that the thing seen was only a rope and not a snake and the idea of snake disappears from his mind. How does he see a snake instead of a rope? How does this superimposition take place? What is the cause of this delusion? Undoubtedly, the gentleman himself and his wrong conception.

A pregnant lioness makes for a herd of goats in quest of prey and springs at a goat to kill it. The goat escapes. The lioness gives birth to a young cub and falls dead on the ground. The shepherd sees the motherless cub and takes pity on it. He feeds the cub with goat's and sheep's milk and he rears it along with the kids. The lion's cub, after some months, begins to eat grass and live like its companions. It also learns to bleat instead of roaring. In due time the cub grows into a mighty lion but it is totally forgetful of its real characteristics. The huge lion becomes a herbivorous creature instead of a carnivorous animal. Whenever the sheep and goats run away at a dog-bark, the herbivorous lion also runs away with the herd. One day, a jungle lion in search of prey, goes to the heard of sheep and goats in which the herbivorous lion lived. But to its great astonishment, it sees a huge lion, more powerful than itself, bleating, eating grass and leaves, and running away like sheep and goats at the least apprehension of danger. The jungle lion gets perplexed at first, but after a close study it understood the position and hides behind a thick bush with the object of catching the herbivorous lion. Grazing along with the herd this lion approaches the place where the carnivorous lion is hiding. The carnivorous lion suddenly jumps upon the herbivorous lion and catches it. The herd runs away. The herbivorous lion begins to bleat and tremble with fear and wants to follow the herd but the jungle lion does not leave it. The carnivorous lion wants to make the herbivorous lion understand its true nature, but the latter does not listen and it only begs the former to let it go back safely to the herd. But the jungle lion does not let it go. It drags it to a water pond and asks it to look at its reflection. Lo! to its great astonishment it saw and understood that it is not a sheep or a goat but a lion, the real king of the forest. The forest lion teaches the sheep lion how to roar instead of bleating, how to eat flesh instead of grass and leaves, and how to roam about in the forest freely and fearlessly. Thus it was that the herbivorous lion understood its true nature and followed the jungle lion into the forest to roam about freely as a veritable king. So it is with habit. Everything depends upon the training given to the mind. If one takes the right path and works earnestly, one enjoys Freedom. And if one takes to the wrong path and adopts the perverted course, one courts misery and bondage.

There is only one Supreme Consciousness in this universe, and that One Thing is being misconceived by the ordinary beings of the universe. Through ignorance they see diversity in Unity. They see the world of names and forms instead of Self or God. Like the man who sees a snake in a rope in darkness, people see this world instead of God. The rope does not really become a snake. The snake is only a creation of the mind caused by ignorance. Even so, this universe has no real existence. It is the Self, the pure Consciousness, and the Supreme Bliss, in which this universe is imagined to exist through ignorance. Consciousness is the substratum of the universe which remains eternally pure and unaffected. If one identifies oneself with that Consciousness leaving aside all the superimposed phenomena one is happy and free. One who considers oneself free is free for ever and one who considers oneself bound remains bound eternally. In reality, the Self is ever-free, it never enters into a state of bondage. It is by delusion that a person thinks that he is in bondage and this thought makes the bondage persist and continue. The Self is a witness, all-pervading, perfect, bereft of all differentiation between like or unlike objects and all attributes, free, Intelligent, actionless, unattached, desireless, quiet and unfathomable. But through illusion it appears as if of the world.

Now, what is wanted is the removal of this superimposition by right effort and by right knowledge.

Know it for certain that what has form is unreal and the Formless is truly Real and Permanent. The round of birth, growth, decay, death and rebirth that one goes through is solely due to the identification of oneself with the perishing body, senses and the mind. The image in the mirror has no real existence. It is nothing but an appearance only. In reality only the mirror exists. Even so, body, sense, mind, etc., have no real existence. Owing to the superimposition on the Self they seem to exist. Just as the all-pervading Akasa (Ether) is inside and outside a jar, even so exists the Eternal, All-pervasive Self inside and outside of all beings. As the individual Self reveals the body, even so does the Supreme Self reveal this universe. As waves, bubbles, and foam are not different from water, even so is the universe not different from the Self. As cloth, when analysed, is found to be thread alone, even so is this universe, when fully considered, nothing but the Self. The world appears as a result of the ignorance of the Self and it disappears with the knowledge of the Self. Just as an earthen pot becomes one with the earth in the long run, a wave and a ripple merge in water, a gold bangle, in gold, even so does the universe which has emanated from the Self dissolve in the Self alone in the long run. The idea of body, bondage, freedom, fear, hell, heaven, etc., are all nothing but the imagination of the ignorant. Owing to these wrong ideas the thirst for life exists. Actually the Self is beyond all these things.

Brahman and Its Creative Power called Prakriti Shakti are identical. They are quite inseparable. They are bound up together. As milk cannot be thought of apart from its whiteness and as fire cannot be differentiated from its burning quality, even so, God or Brahman cannot be differentiated and thought of apart from the Prakriti Shakti. They are the two Aspects of the single Thing and They are one in Essence. It is the Prakriti Shakti that evolves as mind and matter and appears as this phenomenal world. Prakriti Shakti consists of three Gunas, viz., Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. These Gunas are Her substance and qualities from which emanates this whole universe. These three Gunas are the causes of Creation and there is not a single visible thing in this universe which is devoid of these Gunas. Consciousness is never absent from anything, still It manifests Itself in various ways and degrees. In the manifested universe there is not a single thing which is absolutely unconscious and devoid of Chit (Knowledge Absolute) nor is there any object which is absolutely conscious. Consciousness and unconsciousness are always intermingled. The only thing is that the manifestation of the Consciousness differs in different objects and things as per the predominating Gunas. It is the Gunas of the Prakriti Shakti that appears to have made the Whole (Purna) as the not-whole (Apurna), the Infinite as the finite, and transformed the Formless into forms and Consciousness into unconsciousness. The Prakriti Shakti has two powers, viz., Veiling (Avarana) and projecting (Vikshepa). Prakriti Shakti veils Itself by Itself or to Itself and projects the universe from the store of Its previous experiences in which It sports. Prakriti Shakti with the aid of Its Gunas projects name and form constantly in this universe. Prakriti Shakti is of two kinds, i.e., Maya and Avidya. Prakriti with Sattva-Guna predominating is called Maya Shakti. And Prakriti with Rajas and Tamo-Gunas predominating is called Avidya. The Supreme Self reflected in Maya Shakti subduing the three Gunas is called Iswara. Iswara is the Lord of creation. He rules the created, moving and unmoving things. The same Supreme Spirit reflected in Avidya and under the sway of the three Gunas is called Jiva (the individual Self).

What makes a difference between a man and a man, between a woman and a woman and between a man and a woman is these Gunas. All the varieties we see, all the differences we perceive in this universe are owing to the display of these three Gunas. Though all the three Gunas prevail in a person, yet all of them do not equally operate. Any one of the Gunas predominates over the other two and as per the predominating Guna, the character, purity, mental power, ability, etc., differ between the created beings. The mind gets good or bad, noble or wicked desires and thoughts as a result of the influence of the predominating Guna.

When Tamo-Guna predominates in a man, a low descent of consciousness is made. It drags one to ignorance and bondage. Tamo-Guna drags a man to indolence, lethargy, gluttony, lust, anger, greed, hatred, etc., and a Tamo-Guna man will be much attached to sense and sense-objects. Such a man cannot have high ideals of life and Dharma. When Rajo-Guna predominates in a man, he becomes very active. Rajo-Guna works on Sattva-

Guna to suppress Tamo-Guna or it works on Tamo-Guna to suppress Sattva-Guna. In the former case, it works for the Freedom of a man and in the latter case, for his bondage. Under the influence of Rajo-Guna the mind becomes very active with innumerable desires and thoughts. Such a man must be doing something or the other. Rajo-Guna drags a person to pomp and show. Rajo-Guna binds one with ostentation, arrogance, self-conceit, anger, harshness, impurity, attachment, activity, etc., and a Rajo-Guna man gets attached to sense, sense-pleasures and mundane things. When Sattva-Guna predominates in a person, the mind is free from all evils and weaknesses. A Sattva-Guna mind becomes pure and speckless. One gains peace and power. A Sattva-Guna man becomes kind and gentle to all living creatures. He becomes truthful, chaste, God-loving, and God-fearing. Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge, evenness of mind under all states and circumstances, charity, control of the senses, sacrifices, reading of the Scriptures, austerity, uprightness, truthfulness, absence of calumny, love and compassion to all beings, absence of anger, discrimination, renunciation, dispassion to the things of the sense, tranquility, non-coveteousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness, boldness, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred and absence of pride, belong to a man of Sattva-Guna. The evanescent things cannot drag a man of Sattva-Guna. A Sattva-Guna man loves solitude, Divine contemplation and always sticks to high ideals of life.

Though the path of Jnana is short it is very difficult to understand and follow. Everyone is not to walk along this path. Everyone cannot understand and grasp this most intricate path. It is just like walking on sharp razor blades. A Jnani must have a very sharp intellect with the following qualities, viz., (1) Shama, (2) Dama, (3) Uparati, (4) Titiksha, (5) Shraddha, (6) Samadhana, (7) Mumukshutva, and (8) Nityanitya Viveka.

(1) **Shama or Calmness:-** In an ordinary person the mind gets engaged with the sense-objects during the waking-state without rest or respite. An ordinary man has no control whatsoever over his desires and thoughts. Such a man is unfit to take up Jnana-Yoga. The man who has control over his mind and who checks, restrains and holds the mind steadfastly on its Goal (Brahman) after having detached itself from the manifold sense-objects is only fit to take up

Jnana-Yoga. Not allowing the mind to externalise is called Shama or Calmness.

(2) **Dama or Self-control :-** Dama is to exercise control over the gross and subtle senses. Turning both the kinds of sense-organs (gross and subtle) away from sense-objects and to place them in their respective centres is called Dama or Self-control. Every sense-enjoyment drags the mind out and the powers of the mind dissipate. A man who goes on enjoying the senses and their objects freely without any restraint can never be a fit person to take up Jnana-Yoga.

(3) **Uparati or Self-withdrawal :-** Not to think of the objects of the senses is called Uparati. The best Uparati or Self-withdrawal consists in the mind-function ceasing to act by means of external objects. A man who desires and lives in the objects of the senses can never take up Jnana-Yoga. Such a man's mind will be unsteady with numerous desires and thoughts. A fickle-minded man, a man whose mind is unsteady with numerous desires and thoughts can never grasp the most abstruse path of Jnana. Where the mind desires, thinks and plans, there wisdom is unsteady and such a man cannot discriminate much less meditate upon the Formless aspect of God.

(4) **Titiksha or Forbearance:-** To suffer pain, misery, worry, troubles and tribulations, etc., without complaint and without trying to counteract them and, at the same time freedom from anxiety or lament on their score is called Titiksha. Titiksha does not mean that a man must put his hands into the burning fire and then take the pain in a calm and peaceful way. No, not in the least. A man of Titiksha will bear all afflictions in a calm demeanour as they come in the course of Nature. He will not invite them, neither run away from them when they come nor lose hope when in pain and misery. He will not be worried by them and will not lose his patience and the balance of his mind.

(5) **Shraddha or Faith:-** Acceptance by firm judgement of the mind as true of what the Scriptures and the teacher (Guru) instruct and the consequent eagerness to reach God is called Shraddha or faith. Faith is of different kinds, viz., faith in God, faith in the truthfulness of the Shastras (Scriptures), faith in the words of the Gurú and faith in one's own self. Real faith can do miracles in this world. Faith moves mountains. A man of faith can attain everything speedily and a man who lacks faith loses everything and misses the Goal. A doubting soul can never make any

progress spiritually. A Sadhaka (aspirant) must have infinite faith in himself first. The man who loses faith in himself can never succeed anywhere and such a man will be kicked out of his existence and he will remain always as a bound slave. A man who has no faith in the existence of God can never work to attain the same. The man who has no faith in the truthfulness of the Scriptures and the man who does not believe the words of the Guru (teacher) can never work and can never make headway spiritually for lack of knowing the proper path. A Jnana-Yogi's whole mind must attain to that perfect state of assured reliance on the truth of instructions received, without which a whole-hearted and one-pointed practice of those instructions is not possible. Hence, a man who has no Shraddha is not at all fit to take up Jnana-Yoga.

(6) Samadhana or Self-settledness :- Constant practice of holding the mind in God is called Samadhana. It is not the mere indulgence of thought, i.e., not the mere intellectual or philosophical satisfaction in thinking of or studying the Truth. But the intellect must be sought to be resolved into the higher activity of concentration on God or Truth. The ordinary mind wanders hither and thither and it cannot live without any object to think of. To curb this tendency of the mind one must check, control and engage it constantly in thinking of God. This constant practice of holding the mind in God is absolutely necessary for taking up Jnana-Yoga. Without this quality no one can succeed along the path of Jnana-Yoga.

(7) Mumukshutva or Intense desire to be Free:- Desire for Freedom is of different grades. Roughly speaking it is of three main kinds, i.e., mild, middle and intense. A man possessing mild and middle kinds of desire for Freedom is not fit to follow Jnana-Yoga. The man who possesses intense kind of desire to free himself from all bondages, i.e., from that of birth, growth, decay and death by realising his True Nature is the only fit man to take up Jnana-Yoga.

(8) Nityanitya Viveka:- Constant discrimination between the Real and the unreal is called Nityanitya Viveka. A man who takes up Jnana-Yoga must have a very sharp intellect. One must have that intense kind of discriminative power. Discrimination is to be followed by renunciation. One must make a constant discrimination between the Real and the unreal and hold the mind to the Real and discard the unreal. A man or woman who has not developed this quality can never take up Jnana-Yoga. If any person without these eight qualities, takes to Jnana-Yoga, he will sink down to the very bottom instead of making any progress spiritually. It will injure him greatly; and many take up the perverted course and fall an easy prey to various sorts of sense-pleasures. These people go on talking that the world is false and Brahman alone is real. These words are uttered parrot-like without any deep-rooted meaning. But in reality Brahman does not become real nor does the world become unreal to them. They live in self-deception. A dull-witted man becomes bewildered on hearing the real Truth, because an aspirant for Truth is required to possess the above-said preliminary qualifications to qualify himself even to hear of It. Without such qualifications one gets confused about Truth. A person who has undergone discipline, and who has purged of all sins and impurities of the mind is a fit person to hear of Truth and proceed towards Its attainment through Jnana-Yoga. No sooner does a highly qualified man hear the True Nature of the Self from his Guru, than the Truth dawns upon him. He is not to practice any other method of Realization. There are some other aspirants who are not quite up to the mark, and such people, though qualified to take up Jnana-Yoga, have to practice certain other methods of Realization such as Manana (reflection) and Nididhyasana (meditation). Such people can adopt the following methods to attain the Highest.

In the first place they should put to themselves the question "Who am I?" And then go on discriminating and discarding everything as follows:- "I am not this physical body, not these gross and subtle senses, not this Prana (Vital force), not even this intellect. I am none of these things. All these things have a beginning and have an end. These things are ever-changing and impermanent. I am that All-pervading, Eternal and Infinite Self. The Self has no birth, no growth, no decay, no disease, no death, no sex, no caste, no creed, and no colour. The sword cannot cut It asunder. The spear cannot pierce It through. The wind cannot dry It. The fire cannot burn It. The sun cannot scorch It. Water cannot wet It. I am that Infinity without any beginning and without any end. I am ever pure, ever holy and ever perfect. I am Brahma and his Shakti, Vishnu and his Shakti, Shiva and his Shakti. I am the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the Light of lights, the Power of powers and the Life of lives. I am that Sat-Chit-Ananda

Brahman, the One without a second." They should go on with this process. Uttering the Mantra "Om" constantly they should fix the mind in the Self. When this practice is regularly carried out it will help them to realize the Self and attain Freedom.

Another process is: Widen the range of the mind by the following thoughts:- "I am that Infinite Self. The Self is All-pervading, without beginning and without end. Millions and Billions of worlds like this are only a speck in that Infinity. Millions and Billions of worlds like this rise up and tumble down to pieces every second in Infinity like bubbles in a vast ocean. Such being the case, what about this world ? Where is its place in Infinity ? What is its value when compared with Infinity ? When this world itself has no value, what about the so-called riches and greatnesses of the worldly beings and objects ? What about this physical body ? What about the mind and the senses ? Where is the place for them in Infinity ? What about the most filthy and momentary sense-pleasures and their objects ? What value have they when compared with Infinity ? These are all momentary and false things. How can these vulgar, and ephemeral things charm me and misguide me? Nothing can make me weak, and nothing can misguide me and nothing can drag me to bondage. There is no bondage and there is no delusion for me. I am the Supreme Spirit. I am that Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute) Brahman, the One without a second." Go on with this kind of discrimination and expansion of the mind and hold the mind in the Self constantly. When this practice is done it will help one very much in bringing dispassion to the momentary sense-pleasures, their objects and to the attractions of the evanescent world. This process will make one fearless of everything and lead one to Freedom. During the whole process always be uttering "Om".

The third process is: Sit on an elevated place, from where you can see freely the vast sky, or the vast expanse of the sea water. Let there not be any obstruction in the way. Expand the range of your mind or expand the vision of your mind by looking at the vast sky or the vast expanse of water. Think firmly that your Self is All-pervading and everywhere like the ocean or sky in front. Think that your very Spirit is in every man, woman, boy, girl, in animals, insects and even in plants. Think constantly that there is no other thing in the universe apart from the Self. Impress the mind with this idea again and again. Thus try to perceive and see your very Self in everything and everywhere. With this thought try to forget your body idea. Never identify yourself with the body, senses, and the puny ego. Think again and again, that you are All-pervading, Eternal and the Infinite Self. Think that you are the very Self, which is ever free, birthless, growthless, decayless, deathless, and sexless. Give this impression constantly to the mind. Live and dive deep in this idea constantly. Never think of your weaknesses, drawbacks, and failures. Kick off such silly and vulgar ideas; ideas that make you weak, and ideas that produce fear. Never give room to such weaknesses even for a second. Keep always high hopes, high ideas and ideals, and strength-giving thoughts. Think, think again that you are ever free, ever perfect and ever the perfect master of the senses and the mind. Give these impressions to the mind constantly. Live in these ideas constantly and thus expand the mind's vision constantly. This process when properly carried out will give you strength; strength of body, strength of mind and strength of will-power. This will bring dispassion to the body, senses and their objects and this will help you to realize the Self and then to attain Moksha or Freedom. During the whole process always be uttering "Om".

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VII

RAJA-YOGA

Raja-Yoga is the fourth method of controlling the mind and of attaining Freedom. It is the most scientific approach to religion. Raja-Yoga is the most rational way ever adopted to control the mind and to attain Samadhi. Raja-Yoga teaches us the science of the mind, thought-functions, and the internal actions of the mind such as will, ego, intellect, etc. We have instruments to observe the make up and working of external things and objects but we have none to observe the subtle internal functions of the mind and the senses. Mind is the only instrument to know the internal functions and secrets. The method is concentration of the mind. The goal of Raja-Yoga is to teach us how to concentrate the mind and then how to reflect it to discover the innermost recesses of the mind and the Self. Raja-Yoga does not ask us to blindly follow the opinions and experiences of others but it asks us to generalise the mind, to study the thought-functions and then to form our own conclusions after thorough experiments. Raja-Yoga, therefore, never asks anyone of his or her religion, caste, creed, sex, colour, etc., but it only says that as a rational human being everyone has a right to question, to reason, to investigate and then to form one's own conclusions. Raja-Yoga says not to believe anything blindly on book knowledge or on another person's authority; but it urges you to believe a thing only when you yourself find out the truth.

Raja-Yoga has been divided into eight parts. Hence it is called Ashtangga-Yoga. The eight parts are: (1) Yama, (2) Niyama, (3) Asana, (4) Pranayama, (5) Pratyahara, (6) Dharana, (7) Dhyana, (8) Samadhi.

(1) **Yama:-** Yama according to Patanjali means (a) Ahimsa, (b) Satyam, (c) Brahmacharya, (d) Asteyam, and (e) non-receiving of gifts.

(a) **Ahimsa or Non-killing:-** A man who wants to become a Yogi, who wants to reach God or realize the Self must be kind to all creatures. He should not injure any living being even in thought, word or deed. He must always love one and all and wish for the good and welfare of others. This love and these good thoughts for all living beings will greatly help the aspirant after Truth. He should not only not injure anyone himself in thought, word or deed, but also he should not cause anyone else doing Himsa (injury) or approve of anyone doing Himsa. Even the most wicked people and animals become tamed and peaceful in the presence of one firmly established in Ahimsa. By his power and purity even those that come in contact with him lose their wickedness for the time being. When Ahimsa is established in a person, all enmity ceases in his presence.

(b) **Satyam or Truthfulness :-** A man in the religious field must always be truthful, straightforward, honest and frank even in thought, word and deed. Without truthfulness, without honesty and without frankness there cannot be any progress in religion. A lier, a swindler, a cheat, a man of policy and a hypocrite can never be a religious man, nor can he make any headway spiritually. One must be truthful and sincere to the very core of one's heart in all undertakings. When a man is established in truthfulness, whatever he says comes true and never becomes false.

(c) **Brahmacharya or Celibacy :-** Human energy moves in two directions. One is the downward course and the other, the upward. Energy takes a downward course in the form of sexual enjoyments. This downward course of the energy is an irreparable loss to a person. The more this energy is lost, the more miserable one becomes. To gain strength of mind, strong memory and adamantine will-power, preservation of this energy is absolutely necessary (please refer to the author's book on The Way to Peace, Power and Long Life). As a matter of fact, an immoral man and one who loses sex energy constantly can never make spiritual progress. One cannot have knowledge of the Supreme and cannot attain God-realization so long as one is not perfectly established in Brahmacharya. Without perfect celibacy one cannot attain Super-consciousness or Intuition. Brahmacharya is of three kinds, viz., in thought, word and deed. If a person observes strict Brahmacharya continuously for twelve years a particular Nadi (Nerve) on the front side of the body develops. This Nadi remains undeveloped in an ordinary person. With the development of this Nadi one gets the sixth sense or Super-consciousness and one can understand all the events of the past and those of the future. God-realization becomes easy to a true Brahmachari. A true Brahmachari moves with great power. Such a man will shine like the noon-day sun in every walk of life. Every thought and every word of a true Brahmachari will have a great weight. For such a person nothing is impossible to acquire under the canopy of heaven.

(d) **Asteyam or Non-stealing:-** A thief cannot be a religious man. He cannot make headway spiritually. A religious minded man cannot give pain to another even in thought, word or deed; on the contrary, he always desires the welfare and prosperity of others. To remove or to steal the things of another means causing pain and misery to him. Thereby sin is committed. A sinful man is not fit to take up religion and cannot make progress spiritually. So an aspirant after Truth should never steal the things of another even in thought, word or deed. All sorts of wealth come to a man easily who establishes himself in non-stealing.

(e) **Non-receiving of gifts :-** For every service one takes from another, for every gift one receives from another, the receiver has to pay for it in return in some form or another. To accept anything in kind or coin from another means that the receiver is left with a thought of gratitude for the giver. Often by receiving gifts, the mind gets attached to the person who gives gifts and every such attachment makes the mind impure and retards the spiritual growth of the person. Again, gifts made by evil and wicked persons with certain hidden motives produce a very bad effect. Such gifts injure the receiver very much. By receiving such gifts, the receiver has to take a certain portion of the sins of the giver. These sins make the mind impure and drag a man down and he is sure to have a fall spiritually. The aspirant who does not receive any gifts becomes firmly established in his ideal and is thereby enabled to receive the memory of his past life.

Apart from these five, some other schools of thought add some more things to Yama, viz., (a) Kshama or forbearance or the bearing patiently of all things pleasant or unpleasant; (b) Kshma or fortitude in pain and pleasure, failure and success, and in happiness and unhappiness; (c) Dhirti or mercy; (d) Dhaya or kindliness; (e) Arjavam or simplicity, and (f) Mitahara or moderation in and regulation of diet which helps the development of Sattva-Guna in a person.

(2) **Niyama:-** Niyama according to Patanjali means (a) Purity, (b) Contentment, (c) Mortification, (d) Study of Scriptures and (e) Worship of God.

(a) **Purity:-** Purity is of two kinds, viz., internal and external. Internal purity means good functioning of the mind, clear thinking, concentration of the mind, pure and right desires and thoughts and thus keeping the mind free from all sinful internal functions. External purity consists in keeping the body neat, clean and healthy by washing, by wearing clean clothes and by keeping the living place neat and tidy, by drinking pure water and by eating pure food. i.e., simple nutritious food and in moving in good company, viz., that of holy men, Saints and men of character. An aspirant has to observe both the kinds of purity (internal and external) though internal purity is the more important. Under certain unavoidable circumstances one may do without external purity but on no account can internal purity be violated. When purity (internal and external) is observed in extreme, it purifies the mind and the Nadis (Nerves) and one gets true dispassion for all wordly things including one's own body. This helps one much to overcome the attachment to one's own body which one holds so very dear and which is the greater bane and cause of bondage for an ordinary man. Dispassion to one's own body and to the mundane things takes one towards God and speeds up God-realization. The man who is established in purity will enjoy peace of mind and one-pointedness of mind and will gain mastery over the senses.

(b) Contentment:- Discontentment is a sort of disease. It robs the mind of its peace, brings on calculation and planning and makes the mind fickle and restless. An unsteady and calculating mind can never undertake meditation. An unmeditative mind can never enjoy peace of mind and remains far away from God. Contentment comes from complete self-surrender unto the Hallowed Lotus Feet of God. One who is established in contentment has nothing to grumble about. A man of contentment faces weal or woe, success or failure, etc., with equanimity. He is neither elated by success nor is he dejected by failures. By establishing oneself in contentment one enjoys supreme happiness.

(c) Mortification or Austerity :- The object of mortification is to make the body and the organs strong and to get rid of the body idea. By the practice of mortification one gets power and patience to withstand, calmly and boldly all the troubles and tribulations, disease and pain. By mortification one has to deny the body and the senses and always to restrain and keep them under control. By austerity one easily controls the mind and the senses, destroys the impurities of the body and the sense organs and easily finds access to supernatural powers. By austerity the senses become acute, fine and powerful so that the things that are not possible to an ordinary man, become possible to one established in austerity.

(d) **Study of Scriptures:-** We are what our thoughts have made us. What we think that we become. When we desire a certain thing constantly and continue thinking of it, we live in that thing. The mind has no colour and no shape of its own. It takes the shape and colour of the objects of the particular desires and thoughts that one constantly have. To read the Scriptures means to commune with God. To read the lives and teachings of great Saints, Prophets and Incarnations of God means to live and think with the Saints, Prophets and Incarnations of God. The noble and high ideas and ideals of these great men elevate the reader (Sadhaka) and his mind gets metamorphosed automatically thereby leading him to God-realization. Good books serve the purpose of Satsangha, i.e., good company, the company of the pure and the holy.

(e) **Worship of God :-** Every act of ours is a mixture of good and bad. Take any act, good or bad, and analyse it and we find that it is a mixture of good and bad things. An act which is considered very good has a major portion of it good, while a minor portion of it is bad. In the same way an act which we call very bad is found, on analysis, to have a major portion of it bad and a minor portion good. So there is not a single act which we can call absolutely good or bad. Such being the case, every act produces good and bad effects. Our present sufferings and enjoyments are due to our past bad and good deeds respectively, and our future joys and miseries depend upon our present good and bad acts. But as we have seen that every act is a mixture of good and bad effects, how to get rid of this bondage? How to attain Freedom? The ego consciousness is the cause of bondage. The idea of "I" and "Mine" is the cause of bondage and of untold miseries. The best and the easiest way to get rid of bondage is to keep God always in view. One must feel Divine presence constantly. One must love God, adore God, think of God and worship God whole-heartedly. One must do every act as worship, as an offering unto God. This kind of worship and one-pointed devotion to God purifies a Sadhaka and facilitates God-realization.

Apart from the above five rules of Niyama by Patanjali, some other schools of thought add some more rules to it. And they are:- (a) Danam or Charity, i.e., giving gifts to the poor, the needy and to the deserving; (b) Astikyam, i.e., belief in God, belief in the truthfulness of the Vedas (Scriptures) and belief in the words of the Guru (spiritual teacher); (c) Hri, i.e., directing the mind rightly towards knowledge revealed and the practices enjoined by the Scriptures; (d) Mati, i.e., recitation or repeating of God's name (Mantra Jap); (e) Hutam, i.e., Homa and sacrifice; and (f) Vrata, i.e., religious observances in general.

As a matter of fact, there is no religion and there is no spiritual progress without the strict observance of the rules of Yama and Niyama. Yama and Niyama are the very foundation stones of religion. Dishonesty has no place in religion. An unkind, selfish and immoral person cannot make any progress in religion. Character, kindliness, adherence to truth and love, devotion to God and Guru and faith in the words of the Guru and in the Scriptures play an important part in religion. These qualities are quite essential to make headway spiritually. Without these qualities and without establishing one's self in the rules of Yama and Niyama, there is no Freedom. Without strictly adhering to the rules of Yama and Niyama, the practice of Raja-Yoga is injurious and it may lead one to insanity.

(3) Asana :- The third step is Asana or posture. The mind is a very subtle thing. To deal with it, to understand it and then to control the multifarious desires and thoughts and to grasp the most subtle thought-functions, one has to sit long and alone, and then practice, for long hours, in a steady posture. When a man is walking or doing some physical work, he cannot think deeply, i.e., he cannot cope with the substle thought-functions. So in order to think deep, to dive deep into the subtle problems of the mind-functions, one must think patiently for long hours without any interruption. Again, this thinking is not to be for a day or two only, but is to be continued for months and years together. One cannot think deeply with a shaky body. To think deeply, the body must be kept firm and steady. So, Asana means this firm and steady posture of the body. There are various kinds of Asanas, and out of these eighty-four are the main ones. Out of these main Asanas any posture that suits one or gives one pleasure and makes one sit for a long time is the best Asana for one. If a person can sit in any Asana easily and steadily for a long time, i.e., at least for three hours continuously without any shaking, one is said to have gained perfection in Asana. In all the Asanas, the one most important thing to be observed is to hold the spinal column straight and to sit erect holding the chest, neck and the head in a straight line so that the whole weight of the body may rest upon the ribs, as it were. While sitting thus, contract the anus slightly, drag the lower abdomen backward towards the spinal column and upwards. This will be the right posture.

With a bent body, with the chest in, one cannot sit for long in any one posture. Nor can one have very high thoughts in a bent posture. Fine nerve-currents, i.e., the afferent and the efferent, the sensory and the motor, are constantly working in the body. There are six main Nadis. Three on the back side and three on the front side. The back side Nadis are called Ida (left side), Sushumna (centre), and Pingala (running on the right side). In front, corresponding to Ida, Sushumna and Pingala there are Saraswati, Medha and Lakshmi Nadis. Thought-functions or thought-currents that move between the brain-centre and the Chitta (mind-stuff) at Muladhara, pass along the Saraswati Nadi. Nerve-currents have a very close connections with the mind, desires and thought-functions. When a man sits in a bent posture the free movements of the thought-currents are hindered and one is subjected to weak and vulgar thoughts and such a man cannot sit for a long time in any one posture. So, Asana is an aid to clear thinking and concentration of the mind. The selection of Asana is a matter of suitability.

(4) Pranayama :- Pranayama is frequently translated as "Breath-control". No doubt the process aims at breath-control. But the word "Prana" has got a deeper meaning. The mysterious and the invisible vital energy as force is called Prana. Prana means vital forces and Yama means controlling them. So Pranayama means controlling the vital forces. Pranayama is the science which deals with the origin of this mysterious and invisible power, its nature and its control. Prana is not the simple breath; it is the cause of all motion and is at the root of all life in organic and inorganic worlds. Wherever there is the slightest manifestation or expression of motion, life and mind, it is the manifestation of Prana. Supreme Prana is one only. Yet it manifests itself in manifold forms through its diverse expressions. Prana is the ultimate generalization of all the forces of Nature. It is the most subtle thing and, as such, it can never be seen, weighed, touched, measured by any of the most subtle and delicate instruments invented by man so far. Nor can it be captured by any external means. But it can be controlled by controlling the mind and by making the mind pure and subtle. Prana is the final cause of all manifested forces of nature. Before creation, Prana lives in its unconditional and unmanifested causal state. It is closely related to mind. The vital powers of the mind are the two aspects of the Supreme Prana. Of these, Prana is the horse and the mind, the rider. Breathing is only one of the functions of Prana. Prana is the sum total of all gross and subtle forces, powers and energies that are manifested in this universe. All motions are only the manifestations of Prana. The causal state of all manifested powers and forces is Prana. The most subtle form of manifested matter is Akasa. It is the vibration of Prana in Akasa that brings about this gross universe. Again, it is Prana living inside the created beings that manifests itself in various forms of gross powers. It is Prana that moves the body and gives strength and energy to the body and the mind. Prana is the very vitality of breath. The vibration of Prana in the lungs makes a person breathe. Every disease is a function of Prana. Every thought and every act of a being is only a function of Prana. Every sound produced and every word uttered is only the manifestation of this Prana Shakti. All the fine nerve-movements in the living body and the forces of the mind are nothing but manifestations of this Prana. The gross body is the outcome of Prana and Akasa. All the material comes from Akasa and all the forces and energies that work in the body come from Prana. It is the disturbance of this Prana in the body that produces disease. Deficiency in Prana in any part of the body produces disease. Superfluous Prana in any part of the body also produces disease. To restrain, to have control over Prana in the body is what is meant by Pranayama. It is the science that deals with the control of this Prana.

When a man is meditating, what he does is an attempt at collecting and controlling Prana. Spiritualism is also a manifestation of Prana. The working of the fine senses is only a representation of Prana in certain states of vibrations. Our range of vision, our power of hearing, smelling, etc., are also different states or vibrations of Prana. The Akasa consists of layer after layer of varying degrees of vibrations under the action of Prana. The different planes of existence of beings are nothing but the different states of the existence, vibration and manifestation of Prana. Pranayama includes all that is true of spiritualism. Where people in any branch of science discover or invent new things, they actually attempt to control Prana.

Wherever there is extraordinary display of power, it is nothing but a manifestation of Prana. So, even the physical and supraphysical sciences are included in Pranayama. The knowledge of physical science is attained by external Pranayama and that of the metaphysical science by internal Pranayama. Prana manifests itself as the mental power and it can be controlled by mental means only but never by external means. While the means adopted to control the external Prana is called physical science, that adopted to control the internal manifestation of Prana as mental force by mental means is called Pranayama.

In the human body, the centre, the dynamo from where the Prana-currents (nerve-currents) are generated is called Muladhara Chakra, which is situated in the meeting place of anus and the urethra canal. (Please refer to author's book on The Primal Power in Man or the Kundalini Shakti). This Chakra is the dynamic centre of Kundalini Shakti in an average man. The Kundalini Shakti is the cause of nerve-currents, and It works from this centre all the twenty-four hours. This is the most important centre in the human body and this is the centre which is being neglected and left unnoticed by the Western Psychologists and medical science. There are innumerable Nadis

(Nerves) working in the body. The nerve-currents flow constantly through the Nadis. Out of these innumerable Nadis, fourteen are the principal ones. Again, out of these fourteen Nadis, six are the most important. These are Ida, Sushumna and Pingala on the back of the body and Saraswati, Medha and Lakṣhmi Nadis running in the front part of the body parallel to Ida, Sushumna and Pingala Nadis. All these Nadis start from Muladhara Chakra and these are the main channels through which the Prana-currents flow, and other innumerable minor Nadis receive their supply of nerve-currents from these main Nadis. Out of these six main Nadis the passages of Sushumna and Medha Nadis remain closed in an average man. When a man practices Yoga the passage of the Sushumna opens and when a man observes strict Brahmacharya (celibacy) in thought, word and deed continuously for twelve years, the Medha Nadi develops. Ida and Pingala which are on either side of the spinal column work constantly in an average man. Sushumna Nadi runs through the centre of the spinal column. Saraswati and Lakshmi Nadis though work in an ordinary man they are not fully developed. They develop fully in a Yogi only. So Ida and Pingala are the two main sympathetics running on either side of the spinal column. The afferent and the efferent, the motor and the sensory, the centrifugal and the centripetel nerve-currents work constantly through Ida and Pingala Nadis in an ordinary man. Sushumna and Medha Nadis are the finest and the most important and these two Nadis remain only as a possibility in an ordinary man. So long as the activities of these nerve-currents are not properly studied and so long as these nerve-currents are not controlled and made to flow through the Sushumna Nadi, one can never have control over the mind, thought-functions and Prana also. Till then it is impossible to have spiritual awakening and God-realization. So Pranayama means to have control over Ida, Pingala, Saraswati and Lakshmi Nadis and to gain access to the Sushumna Nadi, i.e,, to make the Prana-currents (Nerve-currents) enter the Sushumna Nadi.

In a living body the grossest manifestation of Prana is breath-motions. Finer than breath-motions are the nerve-currents. Thoughts and desires are finer than nerve-currents. There is a very close connection between Prana and mind, mind and thought, thought and nerve-currents, and between the nerve-currents and breath-motion. Prana manifests itself as the breath-motions and as their different functions are called by different names, viz., Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana and Vyana. The breath that works in the heart of beings is called Prana. The breath that works in the anus and in the genitals is called Apana. Samana works in the navel. Udana works in the throat and Vyana works all over the body. Prana is appropriation, Apana is rejection, Samana is assimilation, Udana is utterance and Vyana is distribution. Prana moves upward and downward between the lungs and the nose in breathing. Apana moves downward through the passages of the anus and the genitals. To join Prana and Apana is called Pranayama. As has been said already, there is a close connection between breath and nerve-currents, etc., so by controlling the breath one can have control over the nerve-currents. By having control over the nerve-currents one can have control over the thought-functions. By controlling desires and thoughts one can easily control the mind also. By controlling the mind one can control Prana also. By controlling Prana one can attain Moksha or Freedom. So Pranayama teaches us how, by controlling breath, one can control Prana and attain Moksha.

Breath is like the fly-wheel of an engine and the nerve-currents; while thoughts, desires, mind and Prana are like the finer parts of a machinery. When the fly-wheel moves, the whole machinery with all its delicate mechanism moves. When the fly-wheel stops, the whole machinery stops. Likewise, there is connection between breathing and the other subtle bodily functions. The most obvious manifestation of Prana in the body is the motion of the lungs. If this motion of the lungs stops, all other motions in the body stop. By controlling the breath, and by regulating breathing, one can easily have control over the nerve-currents that are working in the body. The working of the mind and thought-functions is also due to the different motions of the nerve-currents. By controlling or by gaining access to these nerve-currents one can have control over the mind also. The purification of the Nadis (nerves) is the chief means of purifying the body and the mind and this purification of the Nadis is attained easily by Pranayama. When the body and Nadis are purified and when the mind is controlled, Prana is also controlled. This controlling of the breath and the different methods used to control this motion of the lungs and, by their aid, to control the mind and Prana is called Pranayama. So, Pranayama is not non-breathing but it is controlling the muscular power that moves the lungs.

As a result of controlling Prana, supernatural powers manifest in a person. To supply Prana that is wanting in any part of the body and to remove the superfluous Prana that is not wanted in any part of the body is what is meant by Pranayama. Disturbance of Prana in any part of the body, i.e., excess or loss, produces disease. By regulating and by equally distributing Prana all over the body one can free one's self from disease and decay. To keep the body healthy, to keep the mind pure, purification of the Nadis is absolutely necessary, and this purification is attained by Pranayama. The impurities of the body and the Nadis impede the ascent of the Kundalini Shakti to higher centres while their purity facilitates Its ascent. Sexual energy, viz., Virya or semen is a great power of the body. This is the supreme Shakti (power) in the human body embodying all powers and assuming all forms. Instead of allowing this Shakti or energy to become the gross seminal fluid, it is to be conserved, it is to be converted into a form of subtle energy and thus made a source of spiritual life instead of the cause of physical death. With the extinction of sexual desires the mind is released of its most powerful bond. Mind, Prana and Virya are very closely connected. The purification and control of the mind brings on control over Prana and Virya also. Similarly, by the control of Prana and Virya the mind is automatically controlled. Again, when the Virya is controlled, mind and Prana are also controlled. Shukra or semen exists in subtle form all over the body. It is by sexual desires, thoughts and acts that the gross semen is formed. A perfect Brahmachari not only controls and converts the gross semen into Ojas Shakti (into great mental energy), but also, he prevents the gross formation of semen. A perfect Brahmachari goes on converting semen from its subtle form into Ojas Shakti at all times. By Pranayama the semen is easily dried up from its gross and subtle forms and converted into Ojas Shakti. So, Pranayama means the control of Prana, mind and Virya also.

A healthy person breaths, i.e., inhales and exhales, 21,600 times a day. Ordinarily, breath goes to a distance of 12 fingers breadth. But in singing, eating, walking, sleeping, coition, it goes to a distance of 16, 20, 24 and 30 fingers breadth. In violent exercises this distance is increased to a maximum of 96 fingers breadth. When breathing is normal i.e., within normal distance, the longevity of one's life increases; but when it is above the normal distance, life is shortened. Minerals, vegetables and animals (i.e., their bodies) are composed of oxygen, hydrogen, carbon and nitrogen. Of all these, oxygen is of the greatest importance. In the whole atmosphere oxygen is 1/5, of the ocean 8/9, in solids ½, in vegetables ½, and in animals ½. Oxygen gas comprises the major portion of liquids and solids. Ordinarily the inhaled breath contains 21% oxygen. In an healthy adult the average pulsation per minute is 75 and about two ounces of blood is driven from the heart to the lungs in every pulsation. The quantity of blood in an average healthy person is 1/5 of the whole weight of the body. The whole blood, the full quantity of blood in the body flows through the lungs in three minutes, viz., 13,500 lbs. in 24 hours. In all these actions only 1/6 part of the capacity of the lungs is being used. Especially the upper portions of the lungs are not used. They are out of use in an ordinary person. By the aid of Pranayama, the maximum capacity of the lungs, including the upper part of the lungs is easily brought into action. And through the lungs working at their maximum, one can produce tremendous force and vitality in the system and all sorts of diseases can be cured and prevented by systematic Pranayama.

Kundalini Shakti, the Mother of all forces of the body, is in the nerve centre of the spinal column, viz., Muladhara Chakra, i.e., the place where the root of the genitals and the anus meet. This centre (Chakra) is the store-house and the dynamo of the Prana Shakti of the body. There are six Chakras (centres) in the body located along the subtle passage of the Sushumna Nadi which runs through the spinal column. In different centres various powers of the mind are lying dormant. If the normal working of the Kundalini Shakti is disturbed the whole system and the mind will be disturbed. If the Kundalini is properly known and taken safely from centre to centre, It works for the liberation of man. And, on the contrary, when It is not properly understood and neglected, It works towards his bondage. By the ascent of the Kundalini Shakti a person gets the hidden supernatural powers from the different Chakras. So, the aim of Pranayama is to have control over the Kundalini Shakti, over the six Chakras and then to attain Moksha or Freedom by taking the Shakti to Sahasrara (Crown of the head).

The afferent and the efferent nerves, viz., Ida and Pingala, the two main sympathetics on either side of the spinal column, are the two main channels through which the nerve-currents or Prana-currents constantly move and work in an ordinary man. By controlling these Prana-currents and making them run through the passage of the Sushumna Nadi, mastery over the mind, thought-functions and nerve-currents flowing over the whole body is gained. So, Pranayama teaches us how to gain control over Prana, Prana-currents, the mind and thought-functions.

A vast majority of people breathe irregularly. Again, the breathing between men and women, young and aged, differs. Irregularity in food and drink produces irregular breathing. Fear, anxiety, passions, violent emotions, disease, sorrow, nervous excitement, anger, hatred, etc., also cause irregular breathing. These things do not directly affect breathing, but they influence it indirectly by producing abnormal activity of Prana and the Prana produces abnormal activity in the nerve-currents and the nerve-currents, in turn, bring abnormal activities in the movements of the lungs which express themselves outwardly in irregular breathing. So, irregular breathing is only the external sign of abnormal action of Prana or the respiratory centre in the spine, viz., the Muladhara Chakra. He, whose Prana is not disturbed, he, in whom the nerve-currents function normally, in him, there will be a regular breathing. Such a man will enjoy sound health and will be free from disease. So, by controlling the activities of Prana in the nerve-currents and nerve-centres, the movements of the lungs and respiration are also regulated and controlled. Conversly, by regulating and controlling the breath, control over the lungs, nerve-currents and Prana is attained. For, they are closely connected with one another and they interact. So, Pranayama teaches us regular breathing, breath-control and, by its aid, control of the lungs, of the movements of the nerve-currents, and lastly of Prana.

The rules to be observed for practicing Pranayama:- To take up Pranayama one must pay proper consideration to place, food and time or clime. Select a lonely, neat and even place, which is neither too high nor too low, free from sand, pebbles, grass and danger from flood, etc. The place should not be haunted by men, nor should it be a distant place so as to induce anxiety, nor should it be an unprotected place such as a forest, nor a river-bed, a crowded locality, a water-fall, a windly place, etc. These things induce distractions and in a distracted state of mind it is very injurious to do Pranayama. Or, those who can allocate a separate room, which is well-ventilated and free from dust, dirt, smoke and from all disturbing influences such as from insects, flies, etc., will do well to set apart such a room for the purpose of doing Pranayama and meditation. Use this room only for this purpose. Do not sleep in this room. Do not allow anyone of a different tendency or temperament to enter the room. Keep the room clean, neat, pure and holy. Always enter the room after a bath and with clean clothes. Never think of evil and wicked thoughts inside that room. Keep good photos, or pictures in the room, those of great Saints and gods. Burn incense inside the room both in the morning and in the evening. Keep sweet-smelling and beautiful flowers inside the room. If these rules are observed regularly in full faith and sincerity for sometime, the room will vibrate with serenity, will help meditation and will have deep influence over the mind automatically, whenever you enter the room even in a disturbed state of mind. In such a place make an Asana (sitting place) which should not be too high or too low. In that seat put a Kusha grass mat on the even surface of the floor or even on a cot. Above the Kusha grass mat put a tiger or deer skin. Above the skin spread a neat cloth, it may be cotton, silk or woollen. Upon that seat sit facing the East or the North in any posture which is easy, pleasant and steady. The sitting must be always erect. Keep the spinal column straight. Contract the anus slightly and draw the lower abdomen slightly towards the spine and upwards. Keep the chest, neck and head in a straight line, so that the whole weight of the body may rest on the ribs as it were. Keep the chest forward with the chain slightly drawn backward and upward. Always practice Pranayama with an empty stomach. One must take at east three to four hours rest before doing Pranayama after a heavy meal. Stop doing Pranayama when the body is ill, unless it is ordered otherwise by the Guru (spiritual guide). Do not do Pranayama in a tired state of mind and body. Practice of Pranayama must be done four times daily, viz., morning, midday, evening and midnight. Do it regularly if you want speedy results.

Pay special attention towards the food and drink you take. Food must be pure and simple and of a vegetarian character. Avoid every kind of rich food which is not easily digestible. Avoid food that produces bad feelings, passions and sense-irritations. Avoid food or drink that produces abnormal heat or cold in the system. The food and drink taken should neither be too cold-producing nor too much heat-producing. The food and drink taken should not be too hot, too cold, pungent, sour, bitter, too saltish or too sweet.

These things are injurious to the practice of Pranayama. Pure cow's milk, green gram dall (pulse), ginger, black pepper, fresh fruit and vegetables and dry fruit are good foods and they help one doing Pranayama. Food and drink vary according to the time, place and clime and according to their suitability to one's constitution. Never overload the stomach. Always fill the stomach half with food and condiments, one fourth with water and the remaining one fourth must be kept empty for the free passage of air. This is the right way of taking food to be observed by a Yogi. A Yogi, as a rule, should not fast nor take only one meal a day. If this is done, it will be very injurious to the practice of Pranayama and will produce incurable diseases. On the contrary, a Yogi or one doing Pranayama should not be without food for more than three hours. A man doing Pranayama must always take light and nutritious food and drink after every three hours, otherwise the increased gastric fire generated by Pranayama will injure him. A Yogi or a man doing Pranayama must avoid long walks, heavy mental and physical exercises, crowds, free mixing, and gossip or useless talks and discussions. For, moving in crowded places brings on disease. Talking loosely and freely brings on distraction of the mind, which becomes fickle and thus progress is hindered. So, a Yogi must be regular and systematic in work, worship and respite. As Srimad Bhagavad Gita says: "The person who fasts, or feasts, a person who keeps awake or sleeps too much can never be a Yogi." A Yogi must adopt the middle course in all things. Such a man only can make progress and prosper in Yoga. A man or woman taking up Pranayama must observe perfect Brahmacharya or celibacy in thought, word and deed. If not, it may lead one to insanity or it may bring on incurable diseases.

Lastly, coming to time and clime; for a man living in a very cold place, summer will be congenial to the practice of Pranayama. And in a very hot place, winter is the best time for it. Moderate climate is always very helpful. In a moderate climate one can carry on with Pranayama during all the seasons. So, too hot or too cold climates and places are not congenial to carrying on the practice of Pranayama.

Obstructions to Yoga or for doing Pranayama:- Grief, disease, mental laziness, leaving off the struggle for the attainment of the Goal, heaviness of the body, inertia of the mind, thirst for name, fame and for wordly objects, false knowledge, non-attainment of concentration, falling away from the state once attained and irregular breathing, etc.

Pranayama Proper:- Pranayama is comprised of three functions, viz., Puraka (inhaling) Kumbhaka (retention inside of the inhaled breath), and Rechaka (exhaling). The joining of Prana and Apana is called Pranayama.

Pranayama, first lesson. Simple breathing:- Sit straight as detailed above. Close the right nostril with the thumb of your right hand firmly. Inhale as slowlyas possible through the left nostril. While taking the breath in let there not be any noise, so that even you yourself may not hear any sound. Fill the lungs with air as much as you can and then close the left nostril with the aid of middle and ring fingers of your right hand and exhale slowly through the right nostril. When you exhale let there not be any noise. Let it be very smooth and slow, so that even when a small thread is held near the nostril it may not shake. After exhaling through the right nostril, inhale slowly as before through this very nostril and throw it out of the left nostril as indicated already. This makes one round and one Pranayama. Do such four rounds or four Pranayamas at one sitting without any break after each round. This Pranayama must be practised four times daily, i.e., morning, midday, evening and midnight. Pranayama must be done regularly at fixed hours with an empty stomach. If the practice is steady and systematic without any break for some months it brings the purification of the Nadis (nerves), body and the mind. This purification is indicated externally by a calm, serene face with a steady mind and a sweet voice. The harsh lines on the face disappear. This Pranayama harmonises the system and makes one fit to take up higher lessons in Pranayama.

Pranayama, second lesson :- After practising the first Pranayama for a considerable time and after gaining purity of the Nadis to a certain extent and when you feel strength and confidence to proceed further, take up the higher kind of Pranayama or the second lesson. (In all the Pranayama practices, the place, sitting posture and all the other rules must be always observed.) Sitting straight on a clean seat, close the right nostril with the right hand thumb. Inhale through the left nostril slowly and carefully without any noise in four seconds. Close both the nostrils and hold the breath inside for sixteen seconds and then closing the left nostril with the ring and middle fingers of your right hand, exhale slowly without any noise in eight seconds through the right nostril. Then again, closing the left nostril inhale slowly through the right nostril in four seconds, retain it [illegible]e for sixteen seconds and exhale through the left nostril in eight seconds. This becomes one round and one Pranayama. Do such four Pranayamas at a stretch without any break in the middle. Practice this Pranayama four times daily, viz., morning, midday, evening and midnight. The practice must be regular and one must regulate his food, drink and sleep, etc. If not, it will prove very injurious and may bring on incurable diseases. To take up this higher step in Pranayama, one must be very careful and one must always proceed with the help of an expert Guru (teacher). Every wrong step, every wrong method, and irregular and careless practice, will produce undesirable results and many, by not carefully following the rules and regulations, have completely ruined their careers.

After practising this Pranayama in four, sixteen and eight seconds, viz., four seconds Puraka, sixteen seconds Kumbhaka and eight seconds Rechaka for a considerable time, and on feeling pleasure, strength and confidence, increase the time slowly, i.e., inhale in eight seconds, retain it for thirty two seconds and exhale in sixteen seconds. Thus, slowly and steadily, increase the time. When the

Pranayama is done in 12, 48 and 24 seconds, it becomes the milder kind of Pranayama. When it is done in 24, 96 and 48 seconds, it becomes the middle kind of Pranayama. And when the same Pranayama is done in 36, 144 and 72 seconds, it becomes the highest kind of Pranayama. By the milder kind of Pranayama the impurities of the body are thrown out. There will be perspiration of the body as an indication of this. By the middle kind of Pranayama there will be tremor in the body, and by doing the highest kind of Pranayama, there will be levitation of the body and influx of great bliss. By gaining mastery over this Pranayama one gains full control over the lungs, mind and Prana. With this control, the Kundalini Shakti is easily and consciously made to enter the Sushumna Nadi and taken to higher centres safely and at will.

While doing the Pranayama in four, sixteen and eight seconds, and while inhaling through the left nostril, trace the mind from the brain-centre down to the Muladhara Chakra, along the Sushumna Nadi. When the breathing comes to an end, and when the tracing of the mind is over or reaches the last point, viz., Muladhara Chakra, strike violently at the Kundalini Shakti at Muladhara. While holding the breath for sixteen seconds, concentrate the mind on the Kundalini Shakti. And while exhaling through the right nostril, think firmly that you are taking the Kundalini Shakti up along the Sushumna Nadi. Again, when you are inhaling through the right nostril, think that you are taking back the Kundalini Shakti from the head centre along the Sushumna Nadi to Muladhara Chakra. And when you retain the breath inside, concentrate the mind on the Kundalini Shakti. And when you exhale through the left nostril, take the Shakti up to the Sahasrara along the Sushumna Nadi. Thus, throughout the whole process of Pranayama, when you inspire, think that you are taking the Kundalini Shakti down to Muladhara. When you retain the breath, concentrate the mind on the Kundalini Shakti and when you exhale, take the Shakti up to the Sahasrara. Many may find the process difficult to carry out in the beginning but they will find, after a little steady practice, that it becomes easy. This process and this imagination helps one much in raising the Kundalini Shakti to higher planes.

Pranayama, third lesson :- Sit in a straight posture. Close the right nostril with the thumb of your right hand and then inhale slowly and carefully through the left nostril, i.e., inhale for four seconds and do not retain the breath inside but throw it out, i.e., exhale slowly and carefully in eight seconds through the right nostil and then hold the breath outside for sixteen seconds (do not breathe in or inhale for sixteen seconds). Then close the left nostril with the ring and middle fingers of your right hand and inhale through the right nostril in four seconds and closing the right nostril exhale through the left nostril in eight seconds and then retain the breath outside for sixteen seconds. This becomes one round and one Pranayama. Do four such Pranayamas at a time without stopping after each round. Do this Pranayama four times daily at the four intervals of the day, viz., in the morning, midday, evening and at midnight.

When you become perfect in breathing, i.e., inhaling in four seconds, exhaling in eight seconds and retaining the breath outside for sixteen seconds, and when you feel pleasure and confidence and not the least difficulty in carrying out the process, take up the higher step. Increase the time to eight seconds inhaling, sixteen seconds exhaling and thirty-two seconds retaining the breath outside. When this Pranayama is done in 12 seconds Puraka, 24 seconds Rechaka, and 48 seconds Kumbhaka, it becomes the milder kind of Pranayama. When it is done in 24, 48 and 96 seconds, it is called the middle kind and when it is done in 36, 72 and 144 seconds respectively, it is called the highest kind of Pranayama.

The difference between the second and the third kinds of Pranayama is that in the second process the inhaled breath is retained inside and in the third process, one retains the breath outside or remains without breathing.

This Pranayama is not so very dangerous, but still it is better to do this also under the guidance of an expert Guru. Numbers one, two and three Pranayamas must be taken up one by one. First practice number one Pranayama and then practice number two and, if necessary, take up the number three Pranayama.

Pranayama, fourth lesson :- This Pranayama can be connected with number one Pranayama, i.e., those who do not want to take up the second and the third Pranayamas, can practise this, after practising the first kind of Pranayama. Sit erect. Close the right nostril with the thumb of your right hand and inhale slowly and carefully, as long as you can, through the left nostril. Close the nostrils with fingers and retain the breath inside as long as you can. Then, close the left nostril with the ring and middle-fingers of your right hand, and exhale through the right nostril as slowly as possible without any noise. After exhaling, hold the breath outside as long as possible and then breathein slowly as long as possible through the right nostril. Retain the breath inside as long as possible, and then throw it out slowly through the left nostril and remain without breathing as long as you can. This becomes one round and one Pranayama. Do such four Pranayamas at a time without any break after each round. Practice this Pranayama four times a day, viz., morning, midday, evening and midnight.

The progress in this Pranayama depends upon one's capacity for holding the breath inside and outside. In this Pranayama, there is no time fixed for breathing in and out and for retaining the breath inside and outside. If one can retain the breath for long inside and outside, and if one can breathe-in and breathe-out very slowly, the result will be speedy. There is not much danger in this Pranayama. Any man or woman of intelligence, with little carefulness and observing the rules of Yoga can practise this Pranayama safely with benefits. This Pranayama, when carried out regularly for long, brings forth the purification of the Nadis, body and mind. This purity, facilitates the rising of the Kundalini Shakti to higher planes.

Pranayama, fifth lesson :- Sit erect and inhale slowly through both the nostrils. Make a contraction of the throat by bringing the chin towards the neck. Then, force the air upward by dragging the stomach and the lower abdomen towards the spine and upwards. Hold the breath in-between the heart and the throat. Hold the breath thus as long as possible and then by closing the left nostril by the ring and the middle fingers of your right hand, exhale slowly and carefully through the right nostril. Again, breathe-in through both the nostrils and after holding the breath inside as stated, breathe-out through the right nostril. Thus breathe-out only through the right nostril for five minutes. Then following the same process, breathe-out only through the left nostril instead of the right one for five minutes. After practising for five minutes with the right nostril and five minutes with the left nostril for sometime and when you feel pleasure and when you feel strength and confidence, increase the time by one minute. Gradually increase the time up to half an hour. This Pranayama can be practised for one full hour, i.e., half an hour to breathe-out through the right nostril and half an hour through the left nostril.

By the regular practice of this Pranayama one can kill laziness, drive off sleep and drowsiness and free the throat from the clogging of phlegm. By the aid of this Pranayama one can get rid of weariness and keep the mind always active. After long, steady practice of this Pranayama one can dry up the secreted semen, avoid wet-dreams, and remove heat and cold from the body and from the brain-centre. By long, regular practice of this Pranayama, even chronic diseases and moving pains can be rooted out.

Pranayama, sixth lesson:- Sit erect and inhale slowly with the mouth wide open as long as you can. Fill the lungs and stomach with air and retain it inside as long as possible and then exhale through both the nostrils. Continue this process four to ten times or even more if you feel necessary, i.e., when you feel the body much heated and when you feel dryness, do this Pranayama to make the system cool. This Pranayama removes heat from the body and brain-centre, removes slow fevers, destroys weak poisons. As this Pranayama produces cold, it should not be practised in cold places and in cold and damp climates. If done, one is sure to catch cold. So, this Pranayama is meant only to hot climates and hot seasons.

Pranayama must be practised for months and years together without any break. When the practice is carried out regularly and properly, and when the prescribed rules of Yoga are followed and observed very closely, one gains the purification of the Nadis (nerves,) body and the mind. As a result of this purification, one gains control over the lungs, nerve-currents, mind and Prana. Through this control, one can easily take the Kundalini Shakti fully, from the Muladhara Chakra to the higher Chakras and thence to the Sahasrara and attain Samadhi and Moksha. Pranayamas, when properly practised, help concentration of mind and destroy many of the incurable diseases, such as chronic diseases, moving pains, etc., which defy medical science. The one aim of Pranayama is to have control over the vital-forces (Prana) and the mind and then to raise and take the Kundalini Shakti, step by step, safely, consciously, and fully to the Sahasrara through the passage of the Sushumna Nadi. When the Prana-currents flow through the Sushumna, and when the Kundalini Shakti enters the Sushumna, the mind becomes steady. Then, the whole nature begins to change and layer after layer of the mind's power comes into action, and the whole book of knowledge opens to one. Such a person comes into possession of infinite knowledge. One goes beyond the senses, beyond the three Gunas and beyond intellect or reason. Intuition works only in such a person.

(5) Pratyahara:- After Pranayama comes Pratyahara or gathering at one place. Unity is strength. When a mass of loose fibres are twisted together and made into a thick rope, it can be used to bind even a most powerful elephant. As it is, the mind of an ordinary person becomes very weak and powerless by getting attached to senses and sense-objects. The powers of the mind get dissipated by its attachment to multifarious sense-objects. The five senses and the sense-objects constantly drag the mind out, without rest or respite. Thus, the mind constantly externalises and loses the power of concentration. Now, the wandering mind and the senses must be restrained. They must be brought under perfect control. If a person succeeds in attaching or detaching his mind at any sense or sense-object at will, he attains Pratyahara. A person who has attained this power of the mind, i.e., Pratyahara, is a person of great character and he makes substancial progress in religion. So, to gather the scattered mind at will and then to place it or fix it at one place and hold it there is called Pratyahara.

To make the point clear :- Those who think of God in His Formless aspect, think of Him as the All-pervading, Eternal and Infinite Being, without name and form, and beyond the grasp of the mind and intellect. This process, this conception of God is very difficult to comprehend by the embodied. Very few can succeed in this method. Only a man who has far advanced in religion can conceive God in His Formless aspect (Nirguna aspect). For, name and form or thought and subtle mental form always go side by side. Every idea, every thought and desire has a mental form. There is no knowledge of a thing or object reflected in the mind until and unless the mind projects the subtle image of the thing desired and thought of. The Formless aspect of God can only be understood in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Apart from this state, every understanding and every thinking is concerned with a subtle form. So, in order to think of God, people use gross or subtle symbols. The symbols differ with different people according to their taste, inclinations, and growth.

To bring the mind and the senses under control, to make the mind one-pointed some take the help of a Mantra. A Mantra is the name of god, or of goddess, which one loves, likes and adores the most. Some take the Mantra "Om" and give all the qualities of God to It. Om is considered to be Shabdabrahman, i.e., God as sound. When people utter the Mantra, they think of its meaning in the heart-centre or in the head-centre or in any other centre of the body and thus try to fix their mind to that particular place. No doubt the mind wanders to numerous things and places. So many hidden and suppressed desires and thoughts creep up in the mind. Then, one has to discriminate and discard them. One has to purify and cleanse the mind and Chitta (mind-stuff) by the aid of Mantra and by bringing the wandering mind to one point the object of concentration. When this practice is continued for long and with patience and perseverance, the ruffled mind, the wandering tendency of the mind loses its force and one gains the power of concentration. As one goes on with the practice steadfastly, these disturbing thoughts become less and less and one attains the power of Pratyahara.

Some others think of a full-blown Lotus with eight petals and with effulgent Light. They think of a ball of effulgent Light on the Lotus of the heart and they try to concentrate the mind on that Light. They think of God as that Light and constantly discriminate and detach the wandering mind from the senses and try to fix it on that Light. When this practice is for long carried out, the restlessness of the mind goes away slowly and, in the long run, one is enabled to attach or detach the mind from the senses and their objects at will. Then, one can act as a master of the mind, desires and thoughts without being a puppet as before.

Many people cannot fix their mind on subtle things and hence take a variety of gross symbols for the purpose of attaining concentration. The mind easily gets concentrated on a thing which one loves, likes and adores the most. Many take the aid of adorable objects or things for the purpose of attaining concentration of mind. They think and believe firmly that the Lord is in that particular form of adoration. They give all the Divine qualities to that object. They deify every bit of that object. They think of that form in the heart or in some other centre of the body and then try to fix the mind there.

Some others find it difficult to concentrate the mind internally. To concentrate the mind internally, or to make Pratyahara on subtle objects requires long steady practice. Such people take the aid of external symbols and practice concentration on the photos or representations of gods or goddesses, and even take the images of Incarnations of God and great Saints whom they love most and try to concentrate their mind on them. Some others take candle-light or certain bright natural points and try to fix the mind on them. When the mind becomes steady, or when one gains concentration of the mind on external objects or symbols one should slowly but steadily direct the mind inwards and try to concentrate it on subtle objects. There are innumerable ways and methods of controlling the mind and of attaining Pratyahara. Whatever means or way one adopts, the one essential thing is steady and regular practice. Without this systematic work it is very difficult to control the mind. The mind is a very subtle thing, so also are the thought-functions. In order to understand the mind and then to cope with the subtle thought-functions, one has to work hard with great patience for months and years together.

(6) Dharana, (7) Dhyana and (8) Samadhi :- After Pratyahara comes Dharana. In Pratyahara we said that the mind must be put to one place at will and when this concentration of the mind deepens and if one can bring the mind from one place to one point and then hold it on that one point continuously for twelve seconds, it becomes Dharana. When one succeeds in Dharana, and the concentration of mind still deepens and one is able to fix the mind on that one point and live in it so to say, for two minutes and twenty-four seconds without break and without the idea of-anything to the exclusion of that one point, it becomes Dhyana. When Dhyana deepens and when the mind lives on one single point without any break for twenty-eight minutes and forty-eight seconds, it becomes Samadhi. Samadhi is the super-conscious state. Intuition works in a man after the attainment of Samadhi but not before. A man attaining Samadhi goes beyond time, space and causation, beyond the three Gunas and attains Moksha or Liberation. By Pranayama the impurities of the body and the Nadis (nerves) are thrown out. By Pratyahara, the impurities or the bonds of attachment are thrown out. By Dharana and Dhyana, the impurities of the mind are thrown out; and by Samadhi, all obstacles and impurities that hide the Lordship of the Atman or Soul are removed and destroyed.

Samadhi is of two main kinds, viz., Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa, or Samprajnata and Asamprajnata.

Samprajnata or Savikalpa Samadhi :- Samprajnata Samadhi is of four kinds, viz., Savitarka, Nirvitarka, Savichara and Nirvichara.

1. **Savitarka Samadhi :-** Savitarka Samadhi is to meditate upon a gross object again and again and then to hold the mind in the object of meditation constantly forgetting everything else.

2. Nirvitarka Samadhi :- When one meditates, and tries to take the five elements out of time and space, it is called Nirvitarka Samadhi. Nirvitarka Samadhi is a step higher than Savitarka Samadhi.

3. Savichara Samadhi :- In Savichara Samadhi, the five Tanmatras (the five subtle elements) are the objects of one's meditation. Here, one meditates upon the subtle elements and holds the mind constantly in those subtle objects exclusive of everything else. This Samadhi, and this meditation is on more subtler objects than in Nirvitarka Samadhi. Hence, this Samadhi is a step higher than the Nirvitarka Samadhi.

4. Nirvichara Samadhi :- When the aspirant eliminates time and space from his mind, and when he meditates constantly upon the Tanmatras as they are and holds the mind in the Tanmatras, it is called Nirvichara Samadhi. In this Samadhi, the object of meditation is finer and subtler than in Savichara Samadhi and hence this Samadhi is a step still higher than the previous one.

Nirvikalpa or Asamprajnata Samadhi :- Lastly, we come to Asamprajnata or Nirvikalpa Samadhi. When the aspirant merges himself completely in the Formleas aspect of God, it is called Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This is the last and the highest kind of Samadhi. After attaining this Samadhi a man attains Liberation. This Samadhi is called by various names, viz., Nirvana, Nirvikalpa Samadhi, Asamprajnata Samadhi, Turiya or Transcendental state, etc. This Samadhi is an unique state, beyond the grasp and reach of the ordinary human mind. When the mind becomes pure and holy, and when the heart is free from all kinds of desires, sins, attachments and aversions, one attains this most exalted state. In this state of Samadhi, the ideas of subject, object and knowledge merge completely. There is no body idea. There is no trace of the ego, intellect, mind and the senses. The mind and the Chitta (mind-stuff) merge completely in the Supreme Self. Breathing stops automatically and there are no traces of the heart-beats while a man is in this Samadhi. After once attaining this Samadhi, there is nothing more for a man to gain, nothing more to acquire. For such a man, there is no want, no hankering, and no deficiency of any kind. Such a person has full satiety. Words fail to explain this state. For the mind and intellect do not reach that place. Imagination, too, fails completely to reach it. This is a state, a stage, a permanent attainment by itself. This state of Samadhi cannot be explained, but it can only be experienced, enjoyed and felt by a person.

A person once entering Nirvikalpa Samadhi gets complete satisfaction with full Bliss. For such a man there is no fear; no anxiety, no worry and no idea of anything apart from the Self. One sees, one perceives the same Self everywhere and in everything. Even a fool once entering this state gains full Wisdom and is not moved by any of the pairs of opposites. Such a man goes beyond the idea of time, space and causation and beyond the three Gunas, i.e., Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. To gain this state of Samadhi is the aim, the end, the Goal, the summum bonum of life.

After once attaining this Samadhi (Nirvikalpa) an ordinary person cannot come down to the plane of relative consciousness. Such a person remains in Samadhi for twenty-one days and then leaves the vehicle of the body for good. But there are some great Souls, who are born perfect, such as Incarnations of God, Messiahs, Prophets and other great Saints, who come to this world with a Divine Message to be fulfilled and such people, even after attaining Nirvikalpa Samadhi, come down in a most inscrutable way. These great men retain purified ego and work for the suffering humanity. They impart their message, show the path of Moksha and then enter into Nirvikalpa Samadhi again at will.

Om Shanti! Shanti!! Shanti!!!

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